HOW TO DRAW MANGA

Ninja & Samurai Portrayal

Naho Fukagai,
Team Esaka

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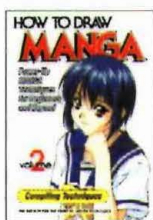
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ISBN4-7661-1477-9

ISBN4-7661-1476-0

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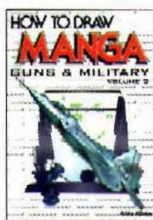
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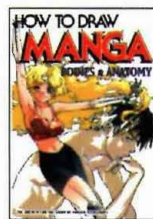
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Ninja & Samurai Portrayal

HOW TO DRAW MANGA

Ninja & Samurai Portrayal

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Preface

All things Japanese have come into vogue the past few years. This trend has not been limited to Japan. "Wa" or the Japanese sensibility has been attracted attention and rising in popularity overseas through anime, Japanese games, films, and other forms of media. With wa in the air, the number of artists who find themselves interesting in drawing book or magazine illustrations or designing characters with a Japanese flavor is increasing. Some of the most typical of such wa-tinted characters are ninja and samurai.

The ninja, an antihero versed in secret arts, and the samurai, who lives gallantly by the way of the sword, make extremely appealing characters. There are probably artists out there who would like to draw ninja and samurai characters but who find themselves at a loss for how these characters or traditional Japanese dress are supposed to look or how Japanese swords are shaped or even what sort of arts ninja practice as well as other concerns. This book was created to help such artists.

This volume explains in systematic fashion how to draw a wide variety of ninja and samurai characters as well as swords, their traditional costumes, the construction of the armor they wore, and common action poses. The second half is a comprehensive collection of innovative, original characters.

Pick up this volume and master the art of drawing ninja and samurai characters!

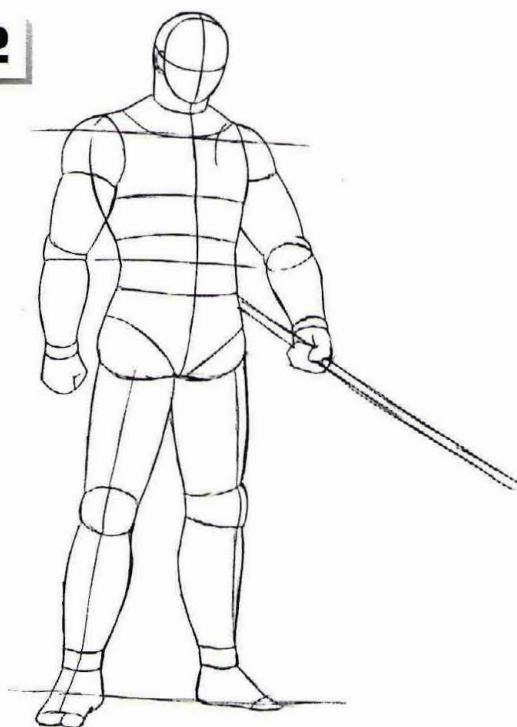
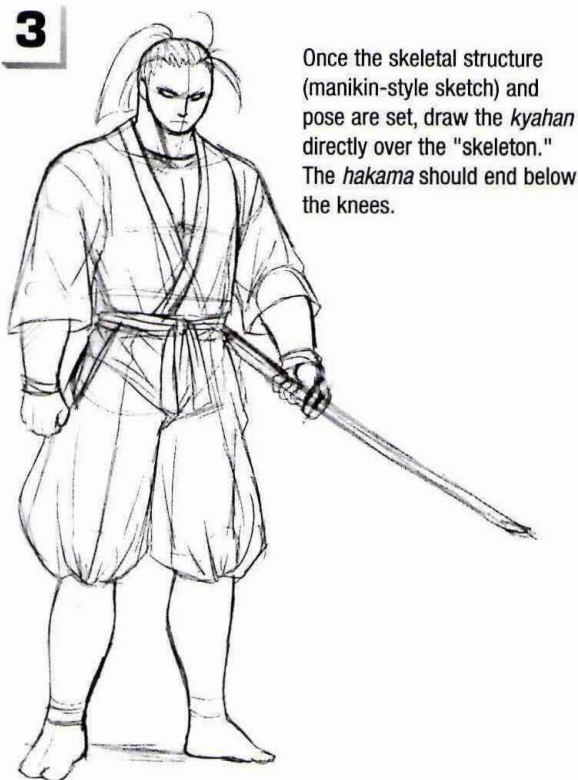
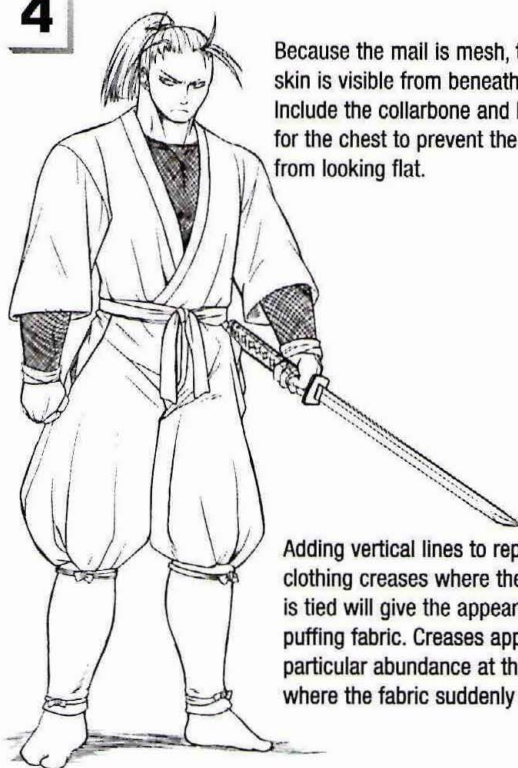
Naho Fukagai, TEAM ESAKA

Chapter 1
Ninja Portrayal

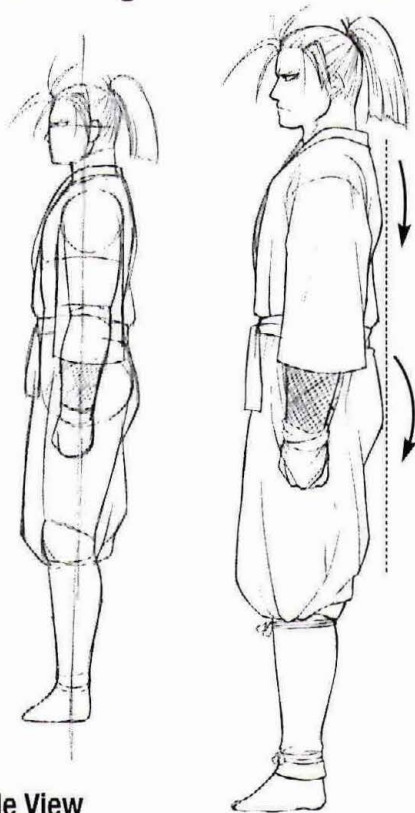
Iga Ninja

The *Iga* were a school of ninja living as a group in the mountains of *Iga* Province, taking their name from the area. The *Iga* ninja faithfully obeyed their lord and adroitly performed their work and were even engaged as guards of Edo Castle. They wore costumes distinctively made of mesh chain mail and often appeared as the protagonist in folktales. When intending to make an *Iga* ninja character stand out in contrast to other ninja, show the face exposed rather than concealed.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Iga* Ninja

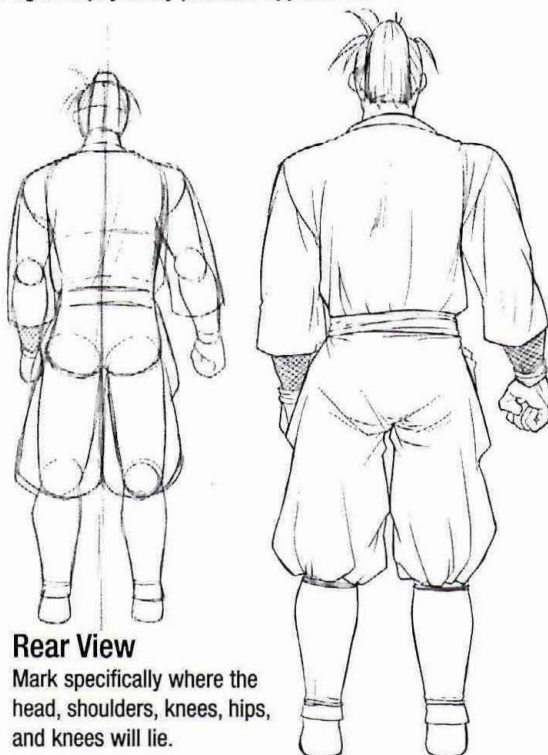
First, draw the layout maintaining an awareness of the bone structure and pose. Be sure to remember the axial lines (centerlines) of the face and body. Showing the legs spread the shoulders' width apart makes the figure appear stable and balanced.

Draw parallel guidelines for the shoulders and waist. Ensure that both shoulders lie along the same line to keep them from shifting to the right or left. The stance is moderately skewed with the weight shifted to the left foot, so remember to position the right foot slightly in front of the left.

Once the skeletal structure (manikin-style sketch) and pose are set, draw the *kyahan* directly over the "skeleton." The *hakama* should end below the knees.

Because the mail is mesh, the skin is visible from beneath. Include the collarbone and lines for the chest to prevent the figure from looking flat.

Adding vertical lines to represent clothing creases where the *hakama* is tied will give the appearance of puffing fabric. Creases appear in particular abundance at the knees where the fabric suddenly bunches.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Side View

When standing erect in a natural stance, the back will appear subtly rounded from the side. The posterior will stick out somewhat further than the neck. Also note that the *hakama* has a baggy fit at the rear and must be defined using a puffed-out, rounded contour that extends beyond that of the backside underneath. Drawing the chest thicker than the waist will give the figure a physically powerful appearance.

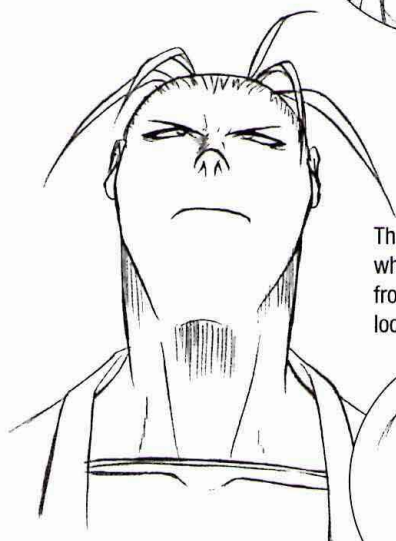
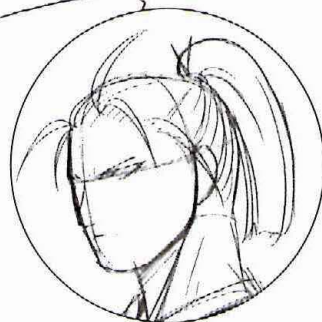
Low Angle

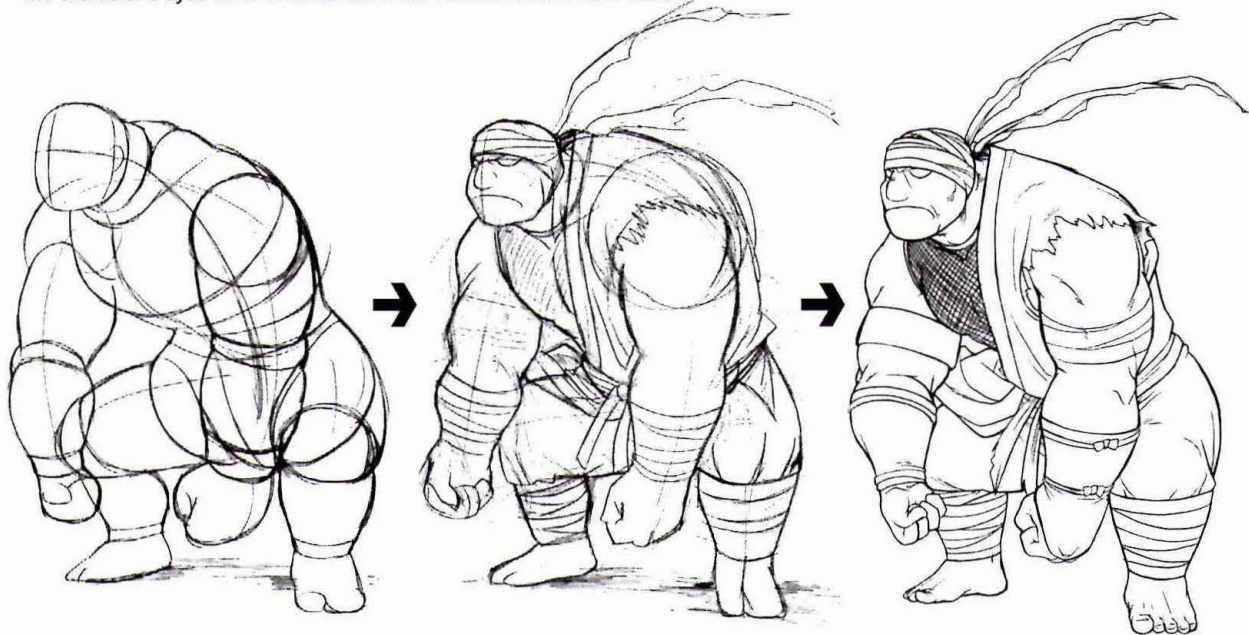
The trick to composing the figure from a low angle is to make the head smaller proportionally small compared to the body.

Rear View

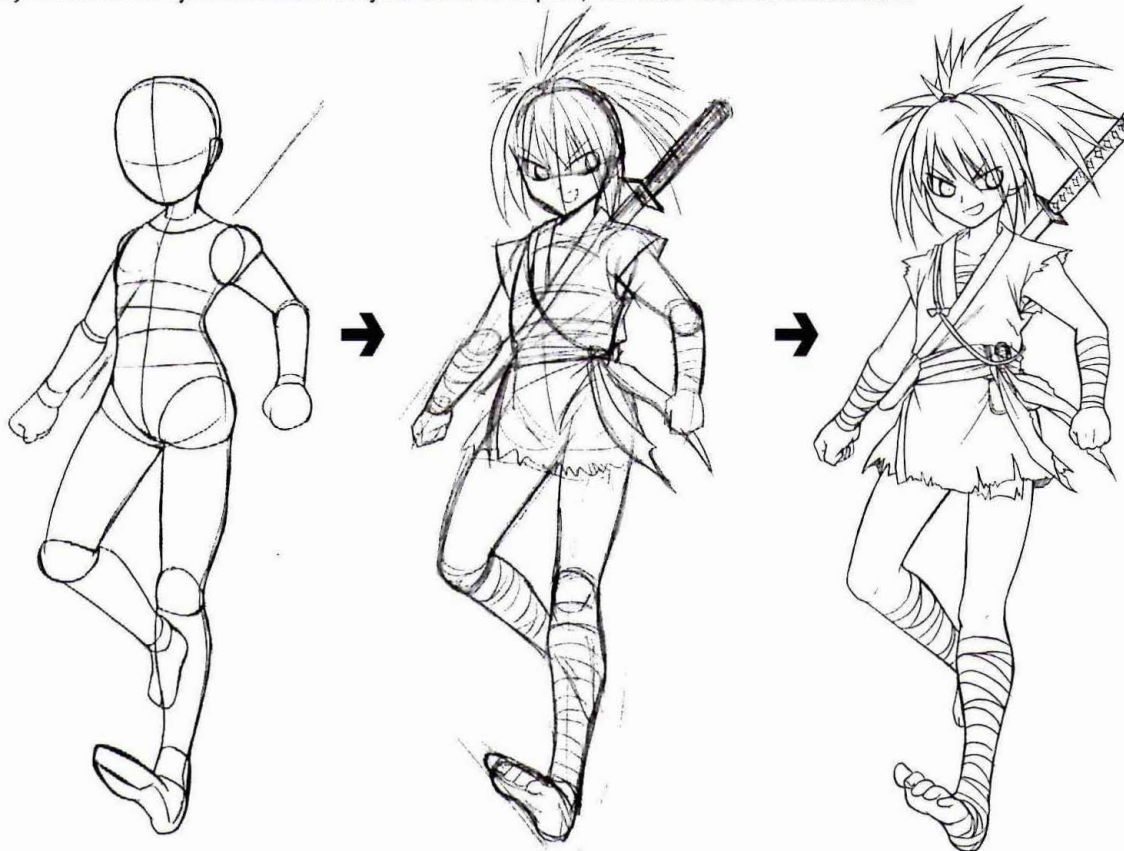
Mark specifically where the head, shoulders, knees, hips, and knees will lie.

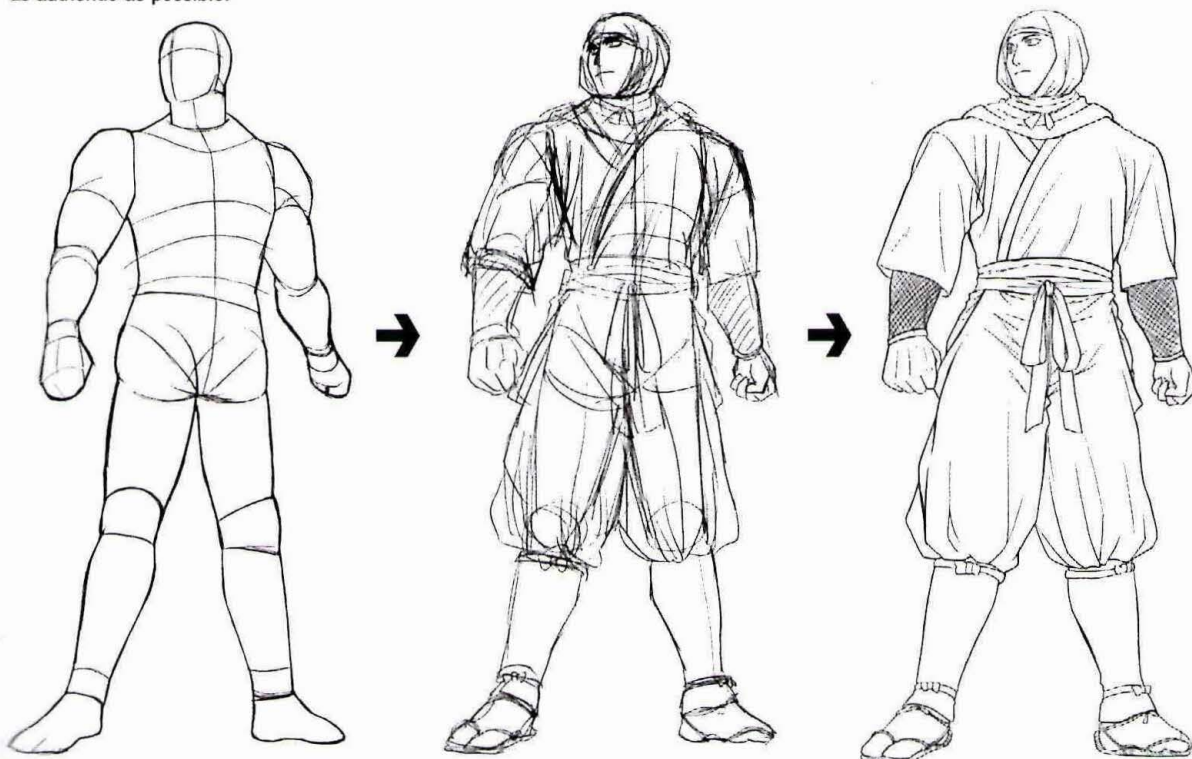
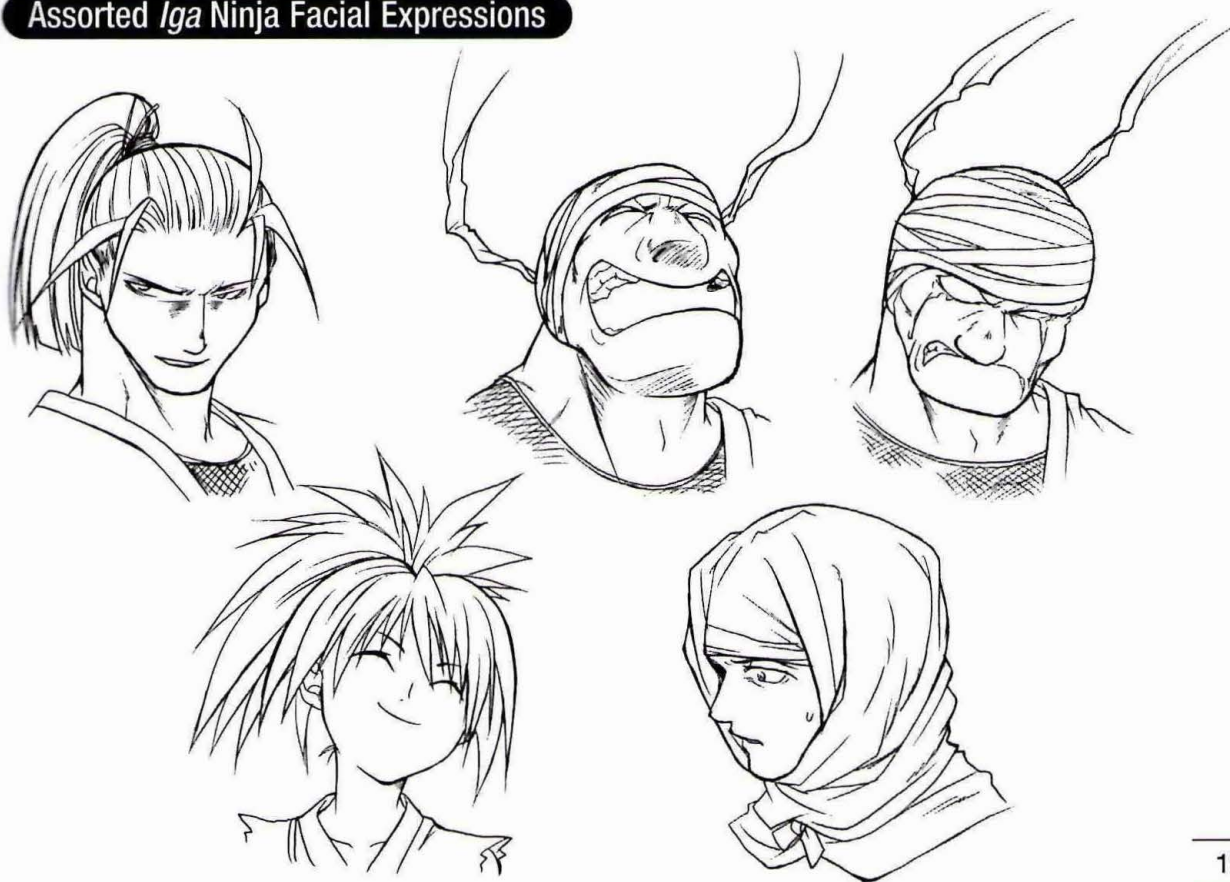
High Angle

In a high-angled composition, the head should be drawn proportionally large with respect to the body.

Faces from Assorted Angles

I. Drawing Gigantic Characters

The thick arms suggest extreme physical strength. To emphasize the arms even further, the figure was not posed in a regular stance, but instead drawn in a gorilla pose, creating a sense of weightiness. The feet are shortened. The upper body was drawn to almost fantastically beefy proportions. When designing a lone wolf-style or laconic character, leave the character's eyes white to make his or her intentions difficult to read.

II. Drawing *Shounen* Ninja

Giving the character eyes that are proportionally large with respect to the face produces a childlike look. Drawing the garment's hemline and sleeves on the short side and making them jagged projects an energetic atmosphere. The cloth wrapped around the arms and legs function as a substitute for a vambrace or *kyahan*. Give the figure a slim body. The *shounen* ninja is too small to carry the sword in a hip hilt, so instead he carries it on his back.

III. Drawing Hooded *Iga* Ninja

Here we see a hooded *Iga* ninja. Use a conventional ninja image for this character. When drawing the sleeves on the short side to expose the forearm, include some chain mail as well. Show as little skin as possible to make the ninja look as authentic as possible.

Assorted *Iga* Ninja Facial Expressions

Koga Ninja

The *Koga* ninja school took its name from *Koga* Province, an area wedged between *Iga* Province and a mountain pass. *Koga* ninja have the image of lurking in dark shadows and had an adversarial relationship with the *Iga* ninja. Consequently, the *Koga* ninja are often portrayed as rivals to *Iga* ninja. Draw the *Koga* ninja hooded, leaving as little skin exposed as possible to make him look properly convincing.

The hood is a distinctive feature of the ninja. A cloth is first wrapped around the head and then tied at the neck.

Showing the swath used to tie the hood trailing back in a breeze imbues a costume that leans toward the austere dynamism and an extravagant touch.

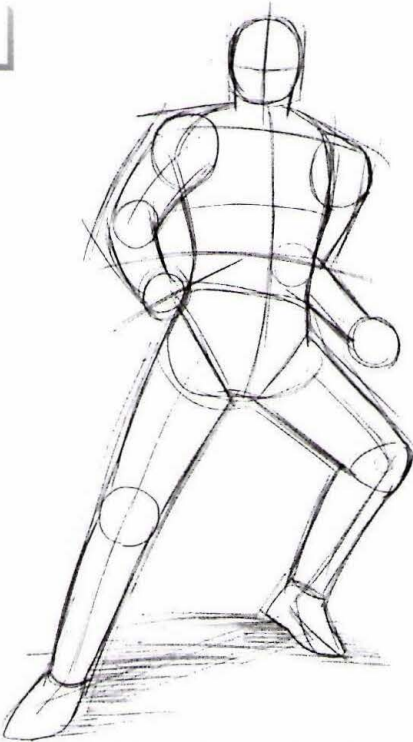
A mask is worn underneath the hood to cover the face to the greatest extent possible.

Here we see the *kunai*, the ninja's dagger.

A vambrace is worn underneath the sleeve, which conceals the skin and further protects the arm.

Waraji (straw sandals) are the standard footwear drawn when showing ninja wearing more than just *tabi*.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Koga* Ninja

1

Here we see a ninja preparing himself for battle with the right foot stepping dramatically forward. Keep depth in mind when sketching at the figure layout stage. Although the figure primarily faces forward, foreshortening should be used in the lower body.

2

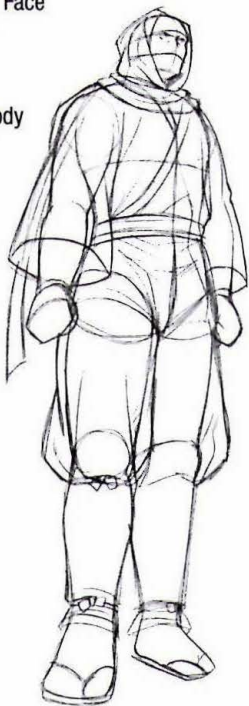
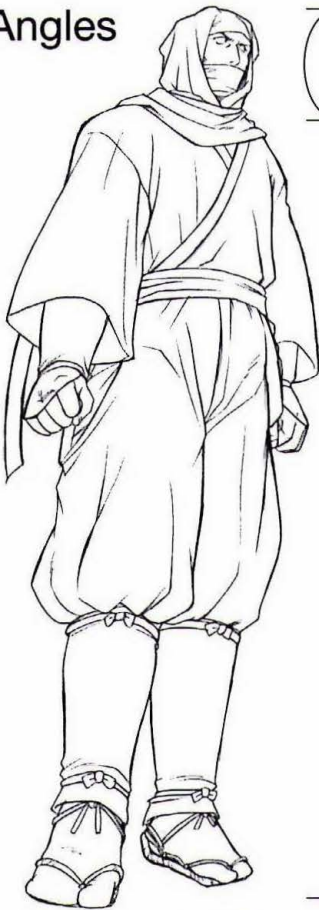
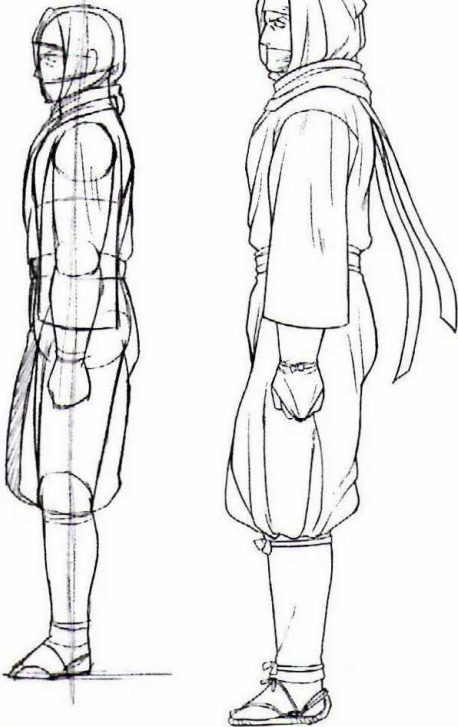
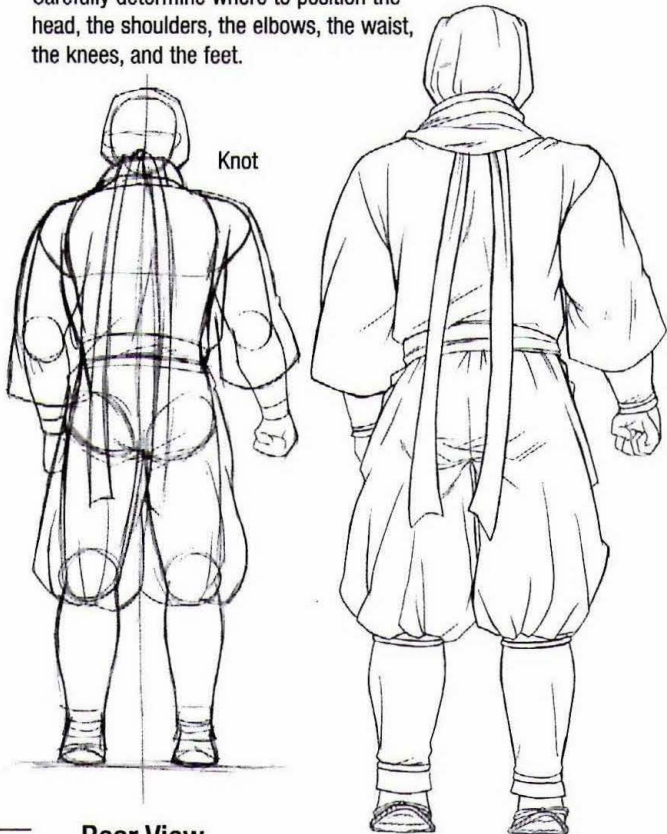
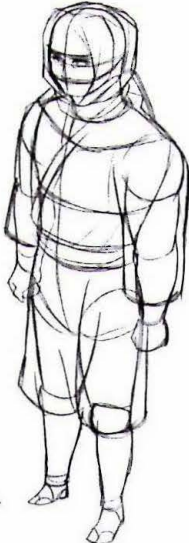
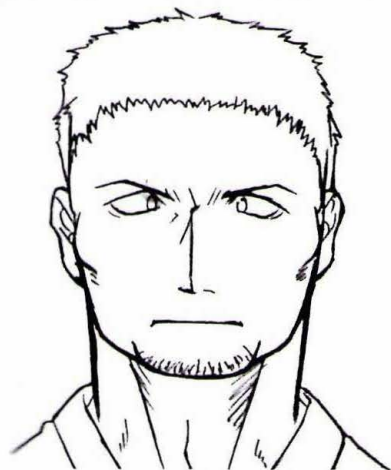
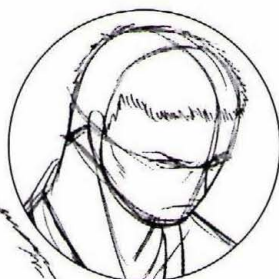
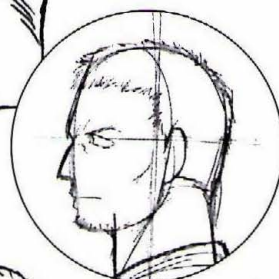
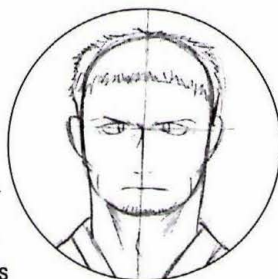
Draw the feet on the long side and carefully construct the skeleton (manikin sketch) to make the figure appear to be moving swiftly effortlessly.

3

Once the "skeleton" is complete, draw the costume over the figure. Be conscious of drawing clothing creases that reflect the figure's movements.

4

Maintain awareness of the position of the knot behind the ninja's head when showing the swath of cloth flowing from behind.

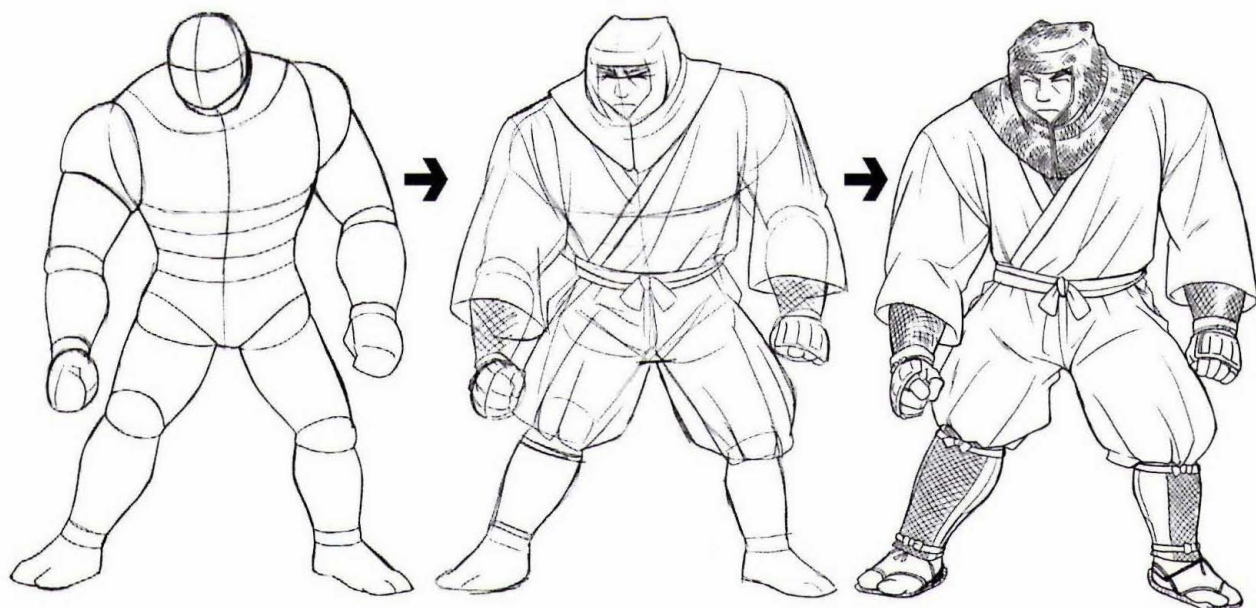
Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Faces from Assorted Angles

Draw the hair layout as if it were a hat resting on the skull and add in hair contour lines. Typically when drawing the hair, artists will establish the position of the hair whorl and then show the hair contours flowing outward from that point.

Incorrect Example A

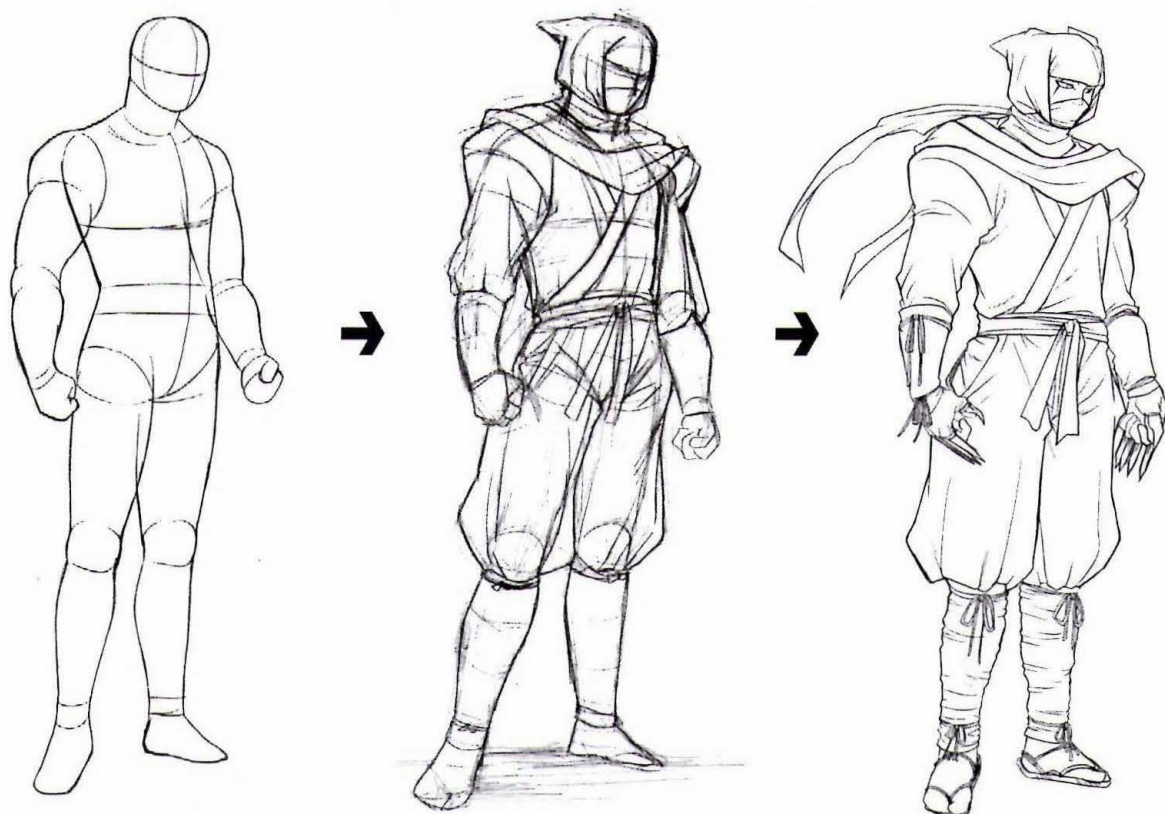
Because the hair and the face are drawn in different perspectives, the forehead, which should be visible, is not. When sketching the layout, do not focus merely on the face, but maintain awareness of correctly proportioning the entire head.

Incorrect Example B

The mouth is not drawn in the correct perspective. The right corner is too low, making the face appear contorted.

I. Guard-type Ninja

Here we see the type of character serving as the primary guard, unflinching in the face of attack. Give the figure an upper body that is burly in comparison with the lower body. Giving the figure thick arms and broad shoulders will give the upper body a heavy feel, and keeping the eyes and the mouth relatively straight (aligned) produces a stiff expression.

II. Villainous Ninja

Draw a slender figure and give the face crisply defined features. Wrapping the shoulders in cloth to make them look broader will prevent the figure from appearing frail even when the character has a slim build. The addition of a scar near the eye heightens the character's creepiness. Showing the figure with "claws" extending from his hands to use as weapons establishes that this is a vicious character and distinguishes him from other ninja.

III. *Koga* Ninja with Face Revealed

Remember to give the ninja touches to make him appear more authentic, such as wrapping the shoulders in cloth and a *hachimaki* (headband) around his head, giving him a sword and other such props. Conceal the face as much as reasonable.

→

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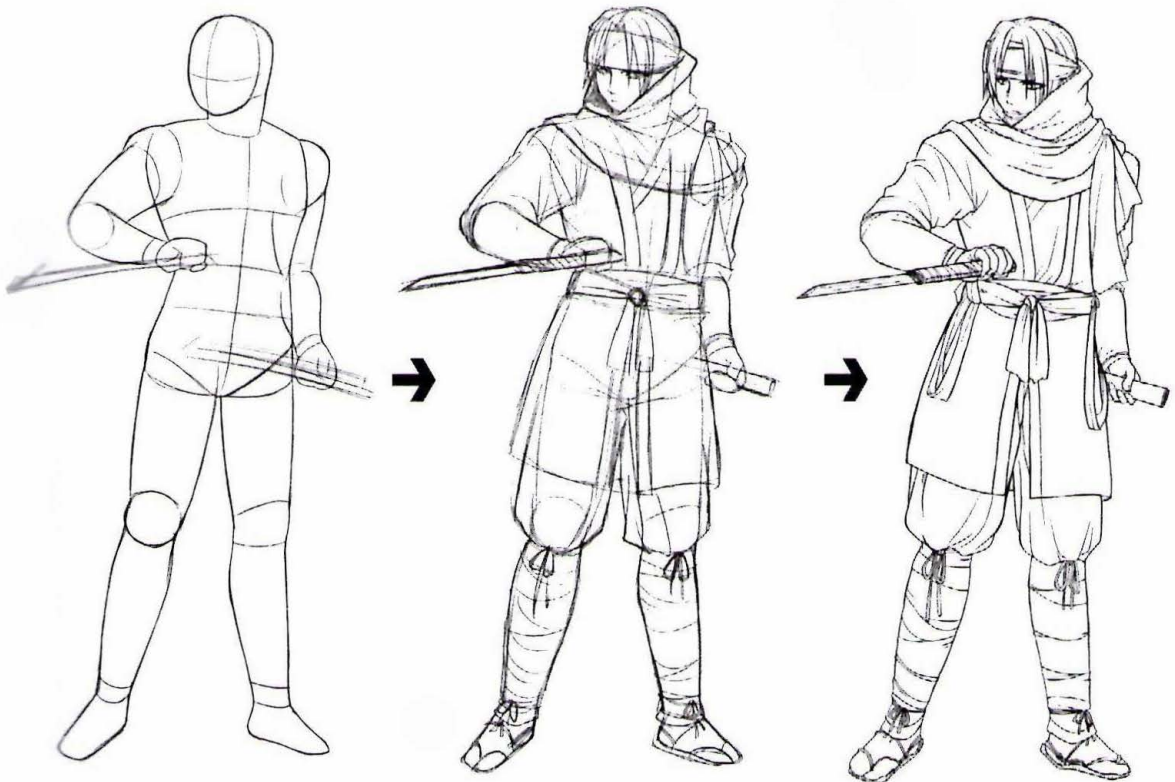
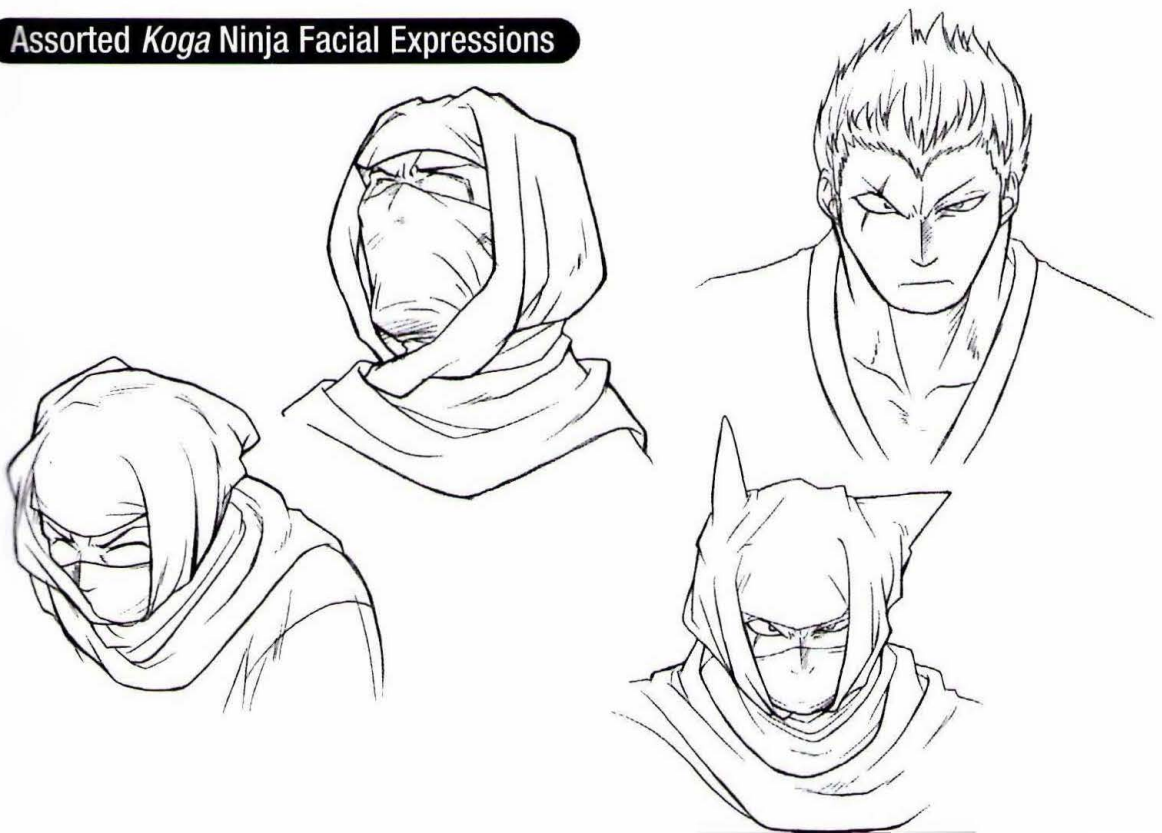

Assorted *Koga* Ninja Facial Expressions

Fuma Ninja

These ninja serve a lord who has been chased from his castle. Pursued by their enemy, the *fuma* ninja escape to the hills, making them their permanent residence, and often taking the occupation of highwaymen. They excel at guerrilla warfare in the hills and forests. *Fuma* ninja are action characters equipped with speed and ferocity. Be selective about the protective gear you dress *fuma* ninja characters in, and use fur and other pieces that will create a feral look to make your characters more convincing. *Fuma* ninja are strongly associated with a villainous image.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Fuma* Ninja

1

First establish how to use foreshortening for the body parts close and far from the picture plane when drawing a figure leaning forward such as seen here, selecting the angle of parts at a distance, the foot touching the ground and the foot touching the ground while determining their positions.

2

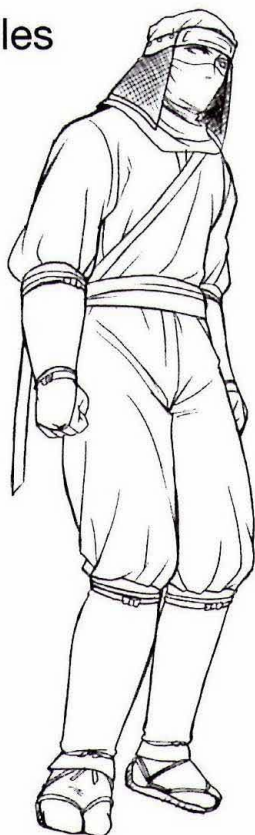
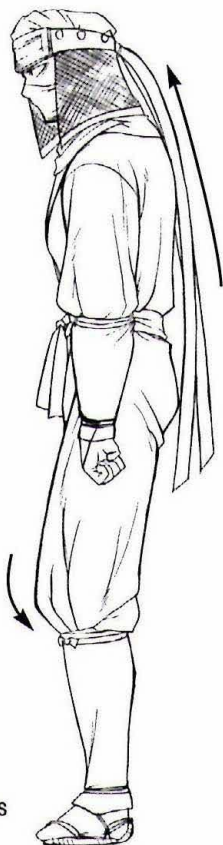
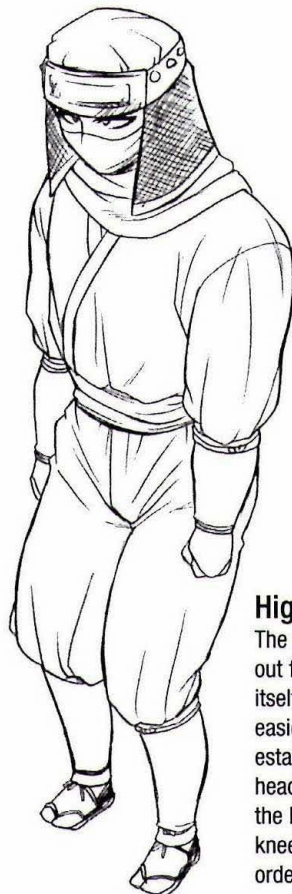
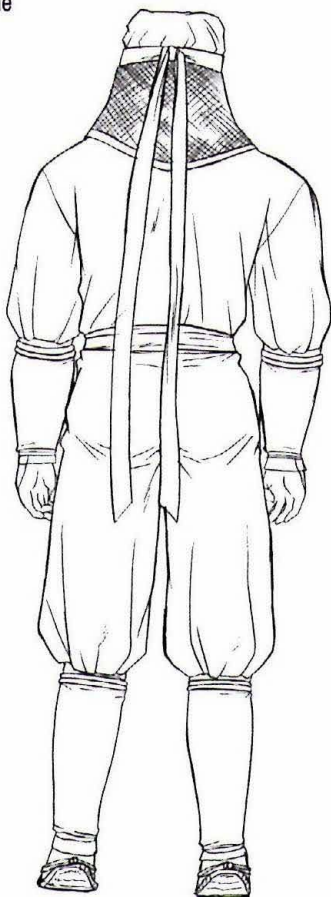
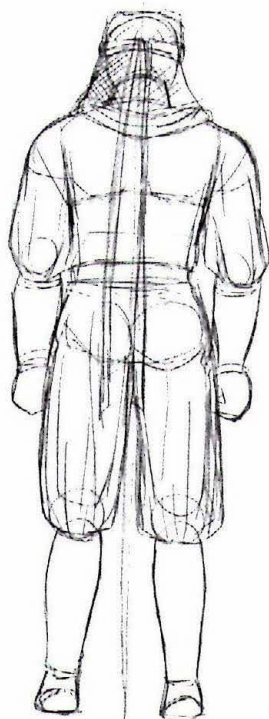
Capture the pose using a large, S-shaped form, and then sketch in the centerlines of the head, torso, and legs in that order. The positions of the shoulders will then automatically fall in place. Another option would be to determine the positions of the weapons before the arms, as this would help establish which directions the arms faced.

3

Draw the skeleton (manikin figure) adhering to the layout and foreshortening you established. The pose shows the extended foot just beginning to land, touching the ground.

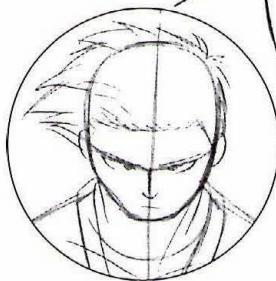
4

The figure is leaning forward, causing the clothing to bunch from the waist to the hips. Therefore, more creases than usual should be drawn between the waist and the hips.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Side View
The bend appearance of the knees as the figure leans forward generates an uncanny atmosphere. The face is turned down while the gaze looks upward.

High Angle
The face and the knees jut out further than the body, itself. You will find the pose easier to draw if you first establish the positions of the head to the hips, the hips to the knees, and then the knees to the feet, in that order.

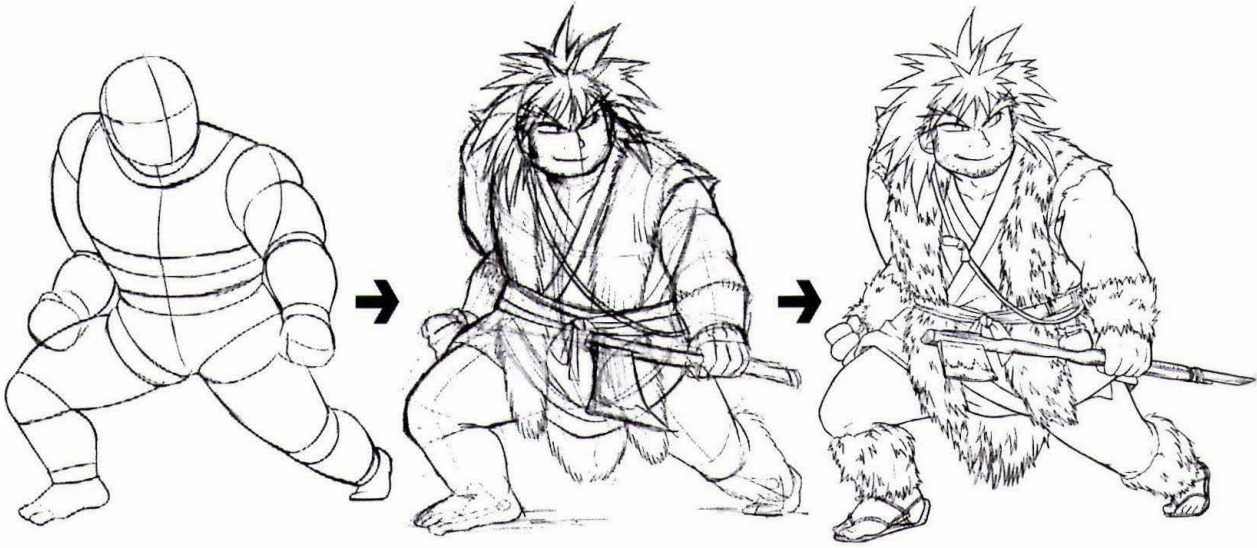
Faces from Assorted Angles

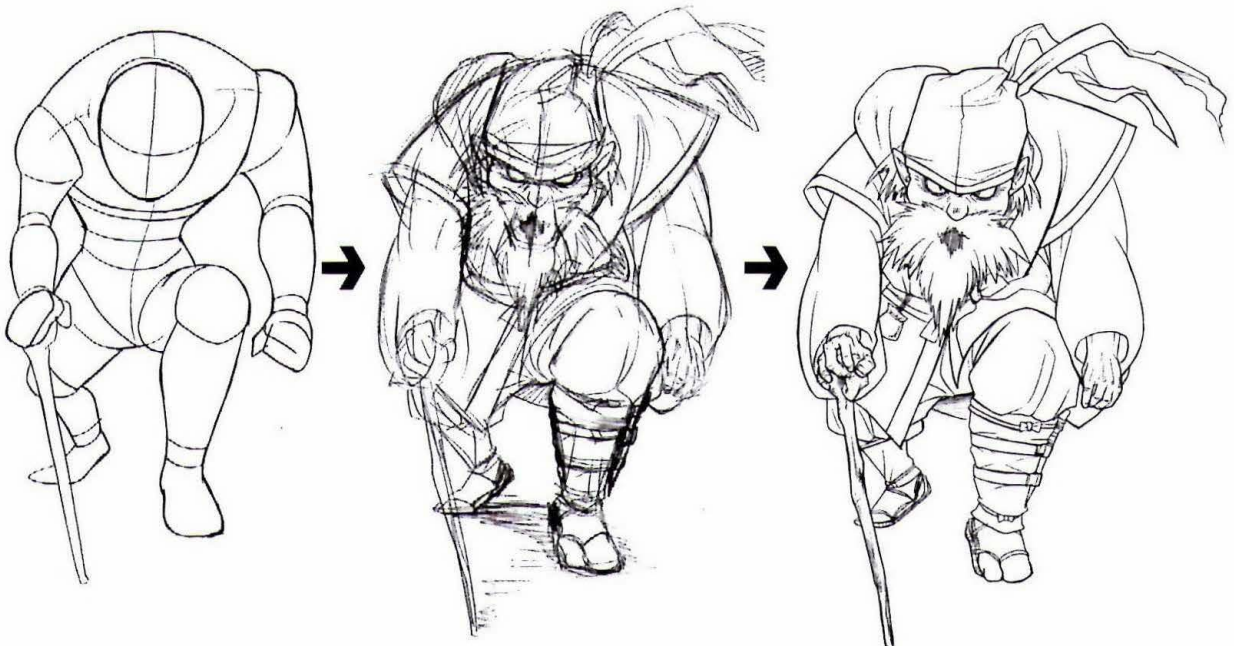
Use a single contour line to draw the bangs' hairline. The hair flowing to the side at first glance appears carelessly drawn, but it is actually collected into a single arc. Establishing an overall flow to the hair makes the hairstyle easier to arrange.

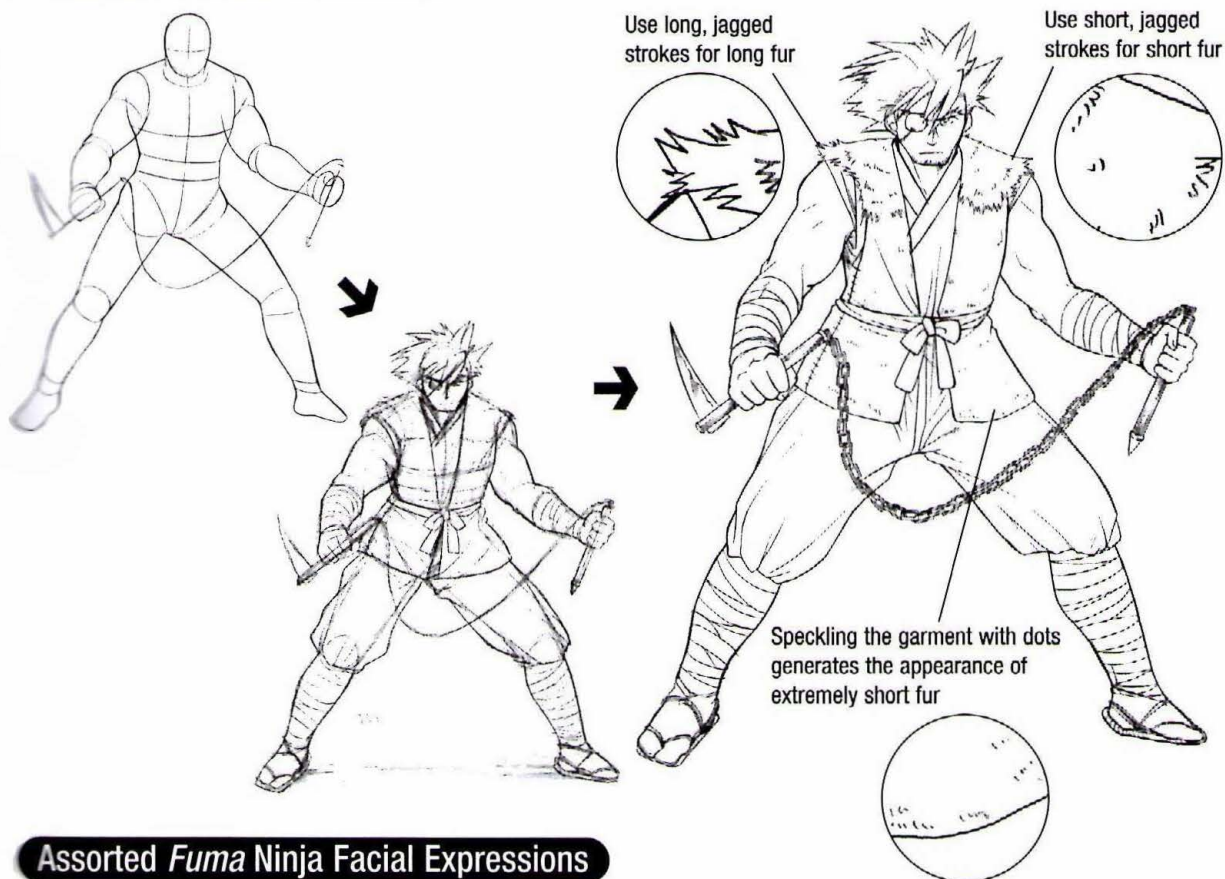
The hairstyle is one element an artist may exploit to create an innovative character design. Here, the hair whorl is shifted toward the right side, creating hair that flows to the side. The hair in back is tied.

Incorrect Example A
The eye contours do not follow the face's curved surface, making the face appear flat.

Incorrect Example B
Here, the outside corner of the eye is too long.

I. Highwayman vs *Fuma* Ninja

Here we see a stout figure with thick arms and legs. The hair is disheveled and the face, unshaven. The trick to drawing *manga*-esque hair standing up in a jagged, scruffy bunches is to alternate big with small clusters. Establish the forms of the large bunches and then fill in the valleys in between with the smaller bunches. Dressing the character in animal hide adds to the feral appearance.

II. Elderly Ninja

At first glance, this character does not appear to be a ninja. However, once upon a time, he was. Young ninjas are forced to recognize their inferiority when confronted with this old ninja's wealth of experience and knowledge.

III. Dynamic Highwayman Ninja

Using jagged forms for the hair and adding an eye patch gives the ninja an unruly look. Giving the character a short fur jacket over his robe makes him appear more like a highwayman. He holds a *kusarigama*, a sickle-and-chain weapon in his hand. Draw the chain as if large and sturdy.

Kunoichi

Female ninja are known as "*kunoichi*." Unlike the male ninja who primarily engaged in combat, the *kunoichi* served as secret informants for their lord. However, the *kunoichi*, like their male counterparts, also underwent harsh training and were skilled in fighting, should the situation call for it. The *kunoichi* were often physically attractive and eagerly carried out their duties without displays of frailty. Their specialty was disguising themselves to infiltrate the enemy's base.

Here we see a character suited to espionage. Giving the *kunoichi*'s costume a looser fit than the male ninja projects a gentler atmosphere.

Give her long, feminine eyelashes and subtly upward slanting eyes to make her appear tougher.

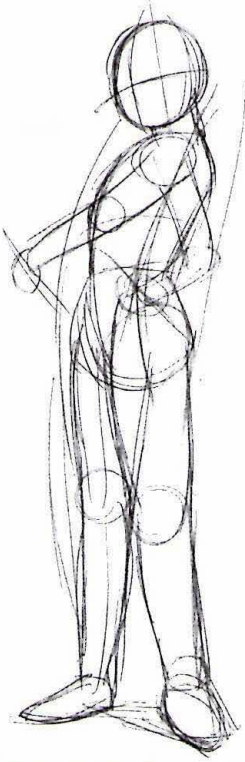
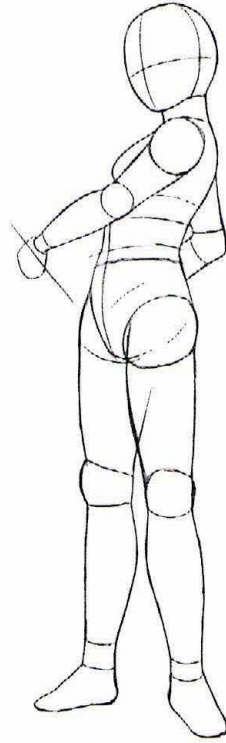
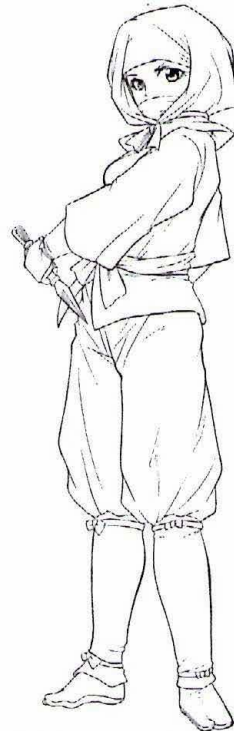
The small *kunai* meant to be thrown.

Making the *obi*'s knot larger than that of the male ninja gives the *kunoichi* a more girlish look. When drawing ninja, be sure to add different elements so that the male and female characters can be distinguished.

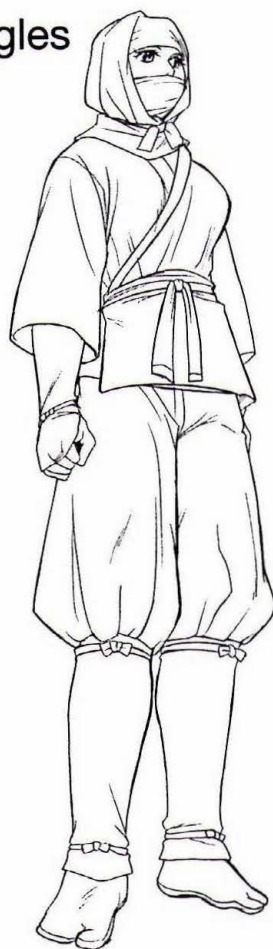
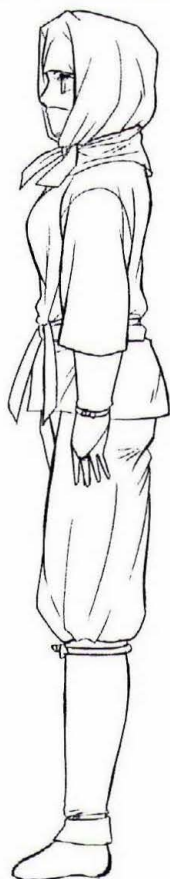
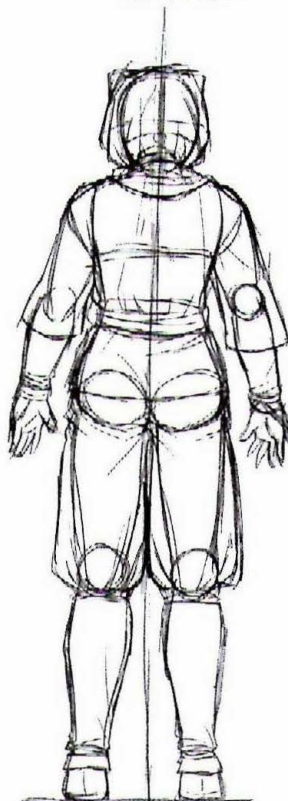
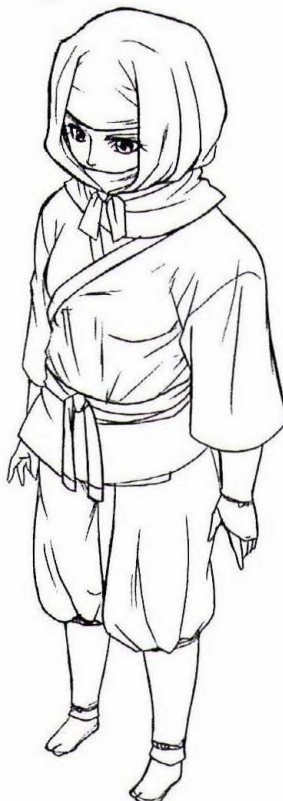
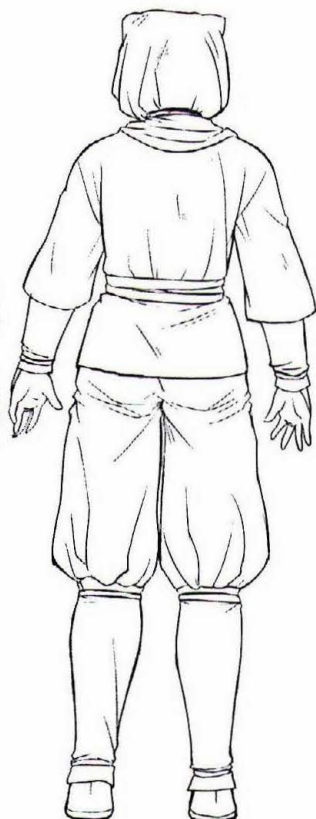
The *tabi*'s soles are made of animal hide. Having the *kunoichi* wear *waraji* (straw sandals) would make her seem masculine.

The feet are not spread apart. Be conscious of not making the *kunoichi* appear coarse or vulgar.

Here we see a *kunoichi* with her hood removed. The overall mood the character projects changes simply by making the hair visible.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Kunoichi*

Sketch the figure layout in the following order: head→shoulders→waist→knees→feet→position of the *kunai*. After you have drawn the arm contours, determine at which angle to draw the hands. Sketch layouts for the portions of the arm hidden behind the body. Take care to ensure the hands and feet are not drawn inordinately big.

The ninja costume makes it difficult to distinguish between the sexes. Take care to give the *kunoichi* femininely curved hips and chest, and slender waist, neck, ankles, and wrists.

Since the *kunoichi* is a female character, give her a slim waist and ample hips, rounded shoulders, and a slender neck.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

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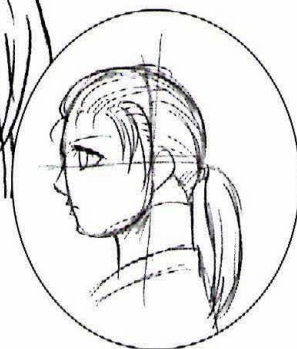
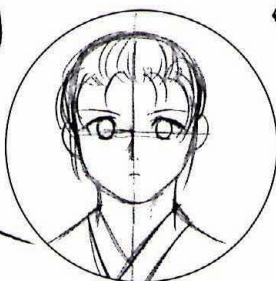
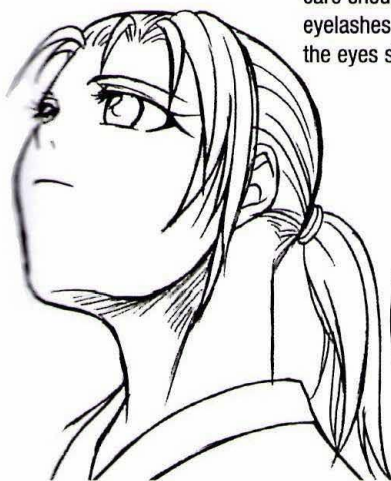
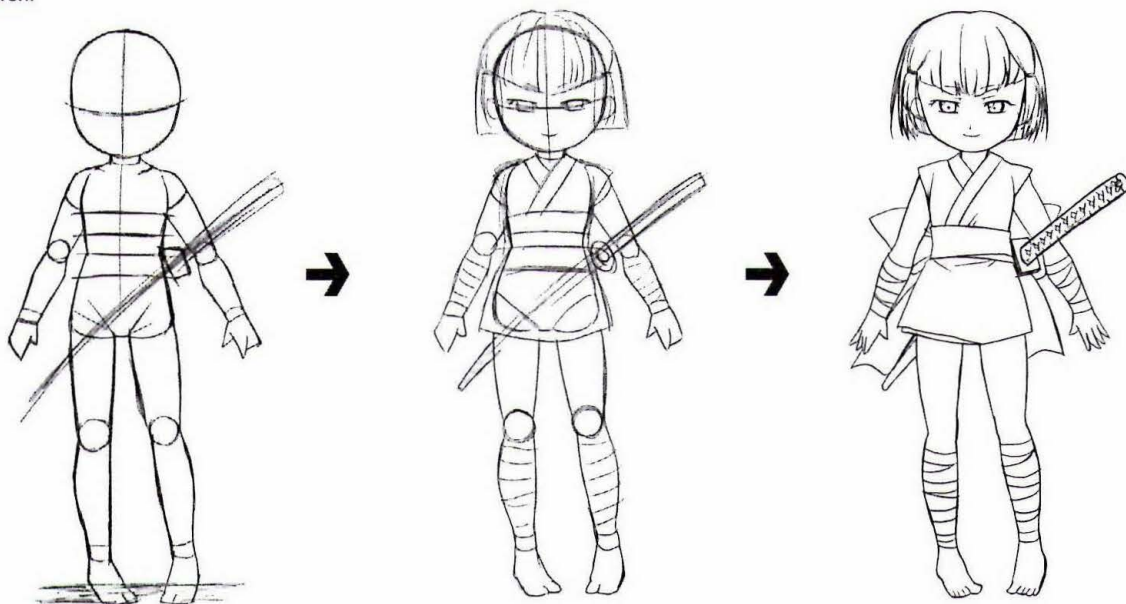
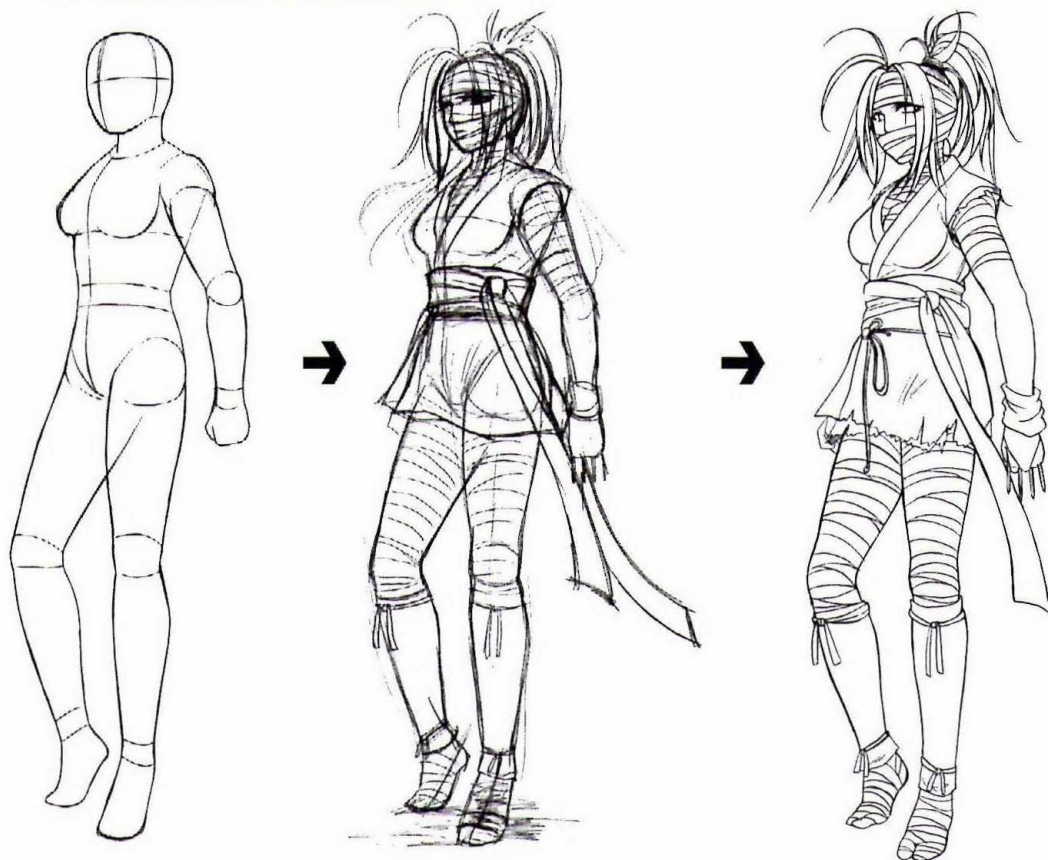

Note that the eyelashes change appearance depending on the angle. The eyes are a key feature, and when drawing female characters, care should be taken with the direction the eyelashes face. The eyelashes take an upward turn from a low angle. From a high angle, the eyes should appear black.

Incorrect Example A
The chin is drawn in too far. In profile, the jaw should be positioned approximately the same height as the underneath of the eyebrows.

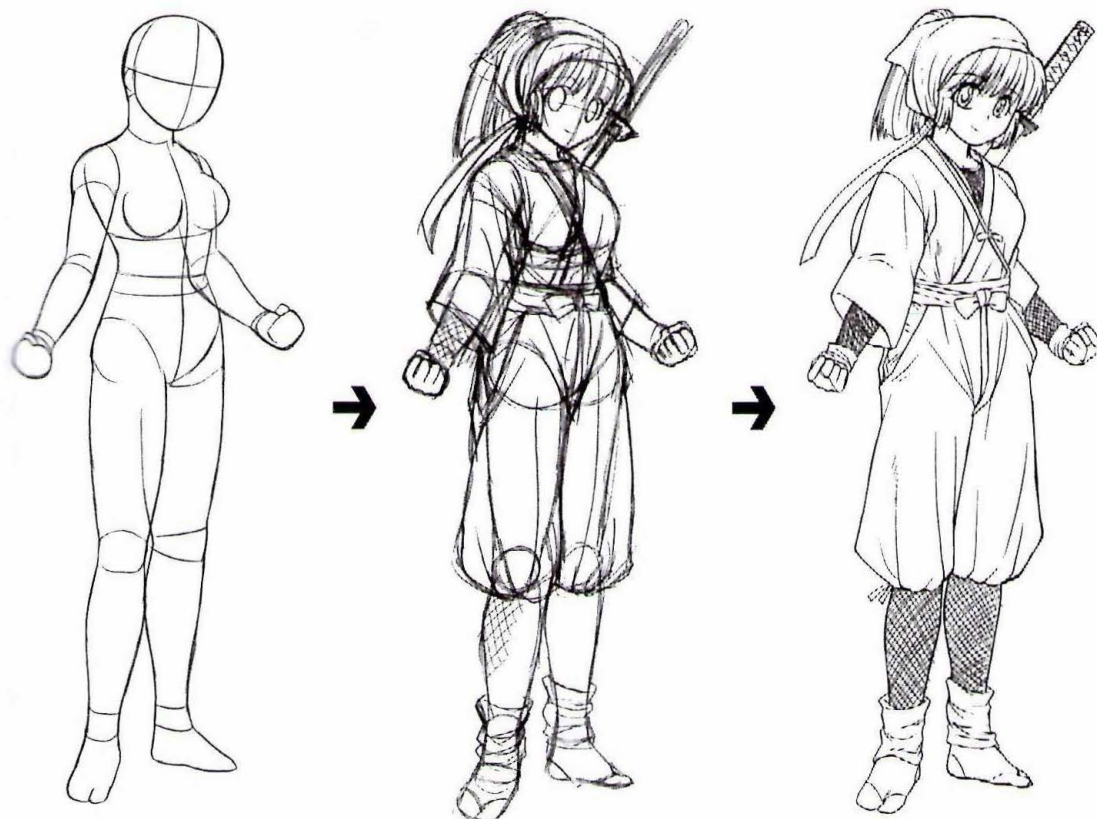
Incorrect Example B
The chin's underside is visible from a low angle.

When drawing the character hooded, determine what the head's shape should be and then add the hood as if draping cloth over the head.

I. Child *Kunoichi*

This young girl was raised from birth as a *kunoichi*. Draw the head proportionally larger than you would for an adult character. The *obi*'s large knot serves to balance visually the rest of the figure, which is slim. The body is slender and the head, round. The bob haircut gives her a childlike appearance. The cagey smile projects a mood different from regular children.

II. *Kunoichi* Spy

To give her a mature atmosphere, increase the amount of exposed skin and emphasize her figure contours. However, this character is a ninja, so she is covered from head to toe in fabric, giving her the sinister air of a spy. Give her narrow, slit eyes to generate a composed, calm impression.

III. Humorous Heroine

Downplay any form of sensuousness and minimize skin exposure.

Assorted *Kunoichi* Facial Expressions

Exaggerate the facial expressions and body language of jovial, comical characters. The trick is to aggrandize not only the facial expressions and gestures, but also embellish movement in the hair, cords fastening the clothing and other details.

One of the charms of an aloof character is her infrequently revealed gentle side or smile. Give the corner of the eyes a downward slant and increase the amount of eyelash shown to give the face a serene look.

Drawing the Eyes

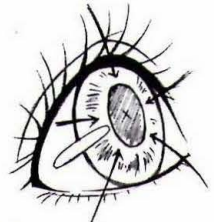
The ninja's eyes are typically almond-shaped. The layout for the eyes should be drawn so that corners of the eyes near the nose taper and both the right and left corners are approximately level.

Use simple, fast strokes for the upper and lower eyelids.

Adjust the shape of the eyelids' contours. A heavy line is commonly used for the upper eyelid.

Determine the size of the irises. The irises should be positioned at the same level in both eyes.

Draw the interior of the iris (i.e. the pupil and reflected light).

Eyelashes are primarily added on female characters.

Draw fine strokes at irregular intervals moving toward the pupil's center. Be conscious of the eye's curved surface when you do so.

Easy Techniques for Drawing Eyelashes

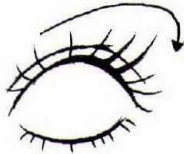
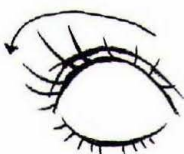
A single eyelash tuft is added to the corners of the eyes: This is a technique common to stylized characters.

Eyelashes are added solely to the outer corners of the eyes.

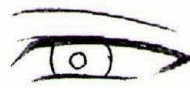
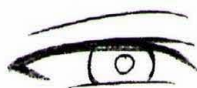
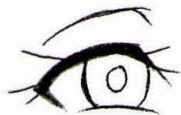
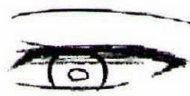
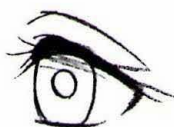
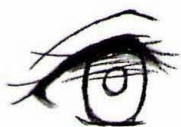
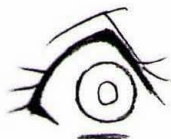
Increasing the number of eyelashes added to the eyes overall makes the character appear more feminine and alluring.

Standard Eye with Eyelid Fold: The eyes appear bright and wide-open.

Long Eye with Eyelid Fold: These eyes are suited to faces with deep-set or prominent features. The eyeballs, themselves are large, but the eyes appear narrow, projecting a seductive or sleepy atmosphere.

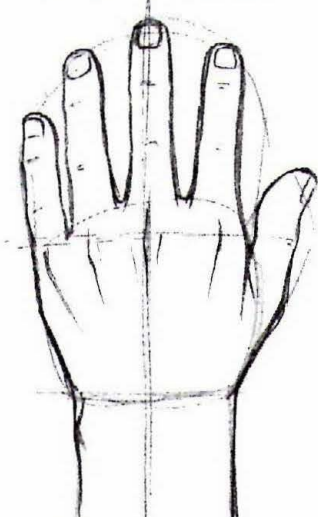
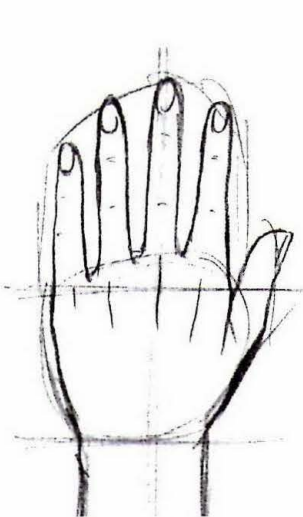
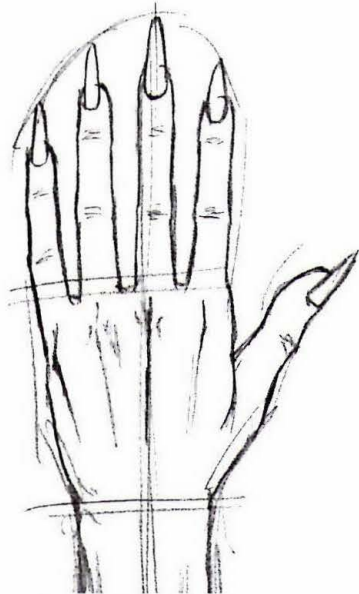
Eye without Eyelid Fold: These eyes are suited to relatively level, distinctly Japanese faces. The eyes project a sense of intelligence. They look narrow and small. Almond-shaped, slit eyes tend to appear more attractive.

Drawing longer eyelashes toward the outside of the eye produces a well-balanced look. The lower eyelashes should be short and uniform (but still slightly longer toward the outer corners of the eyes).

Expressions Portrayed through the Eyes

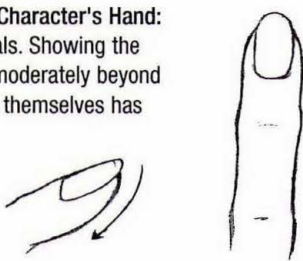
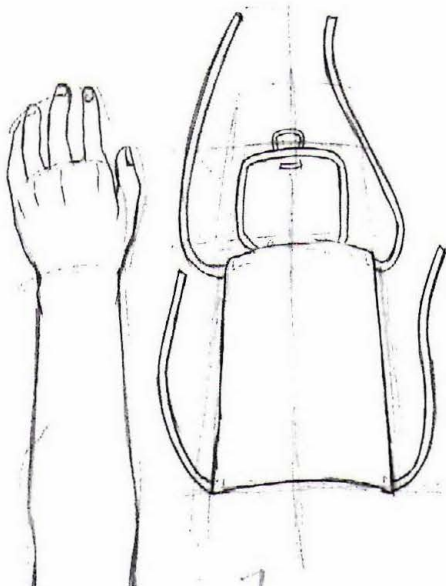
Female eyes | Male eyes

Happy—The eyes are not drawn to appear wide open, but an arc is etched over the lower eyelid.

Sad—Add shading underneath the upper eyelids to give the eyes a vacant look.

Angry—The eyes are wide open, and the iris and pupils are small. The upper eyelids are drawn close to the eyelid folds.

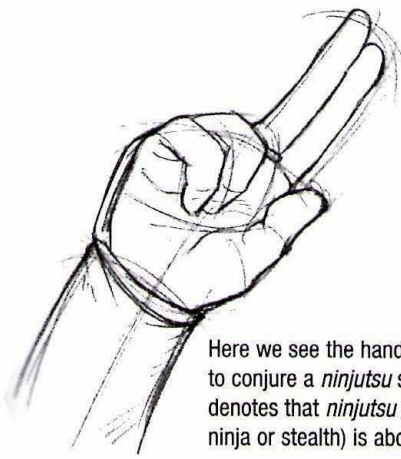
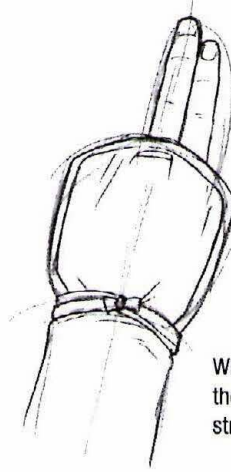
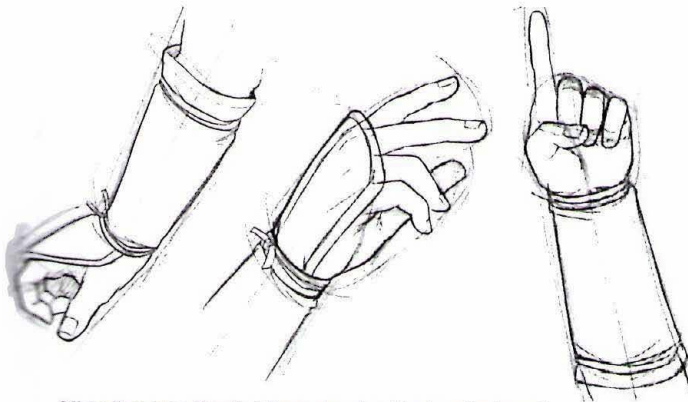
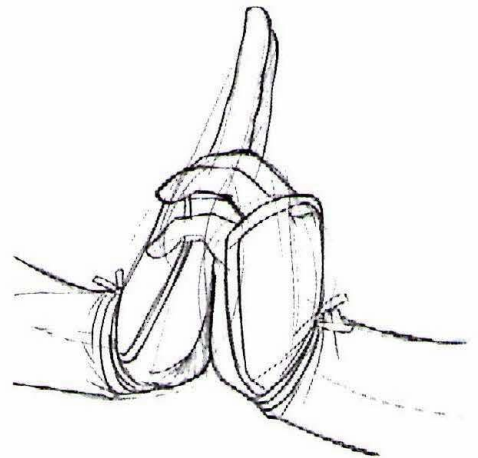
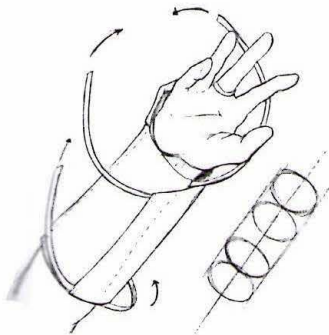
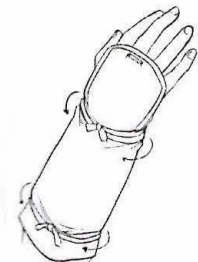
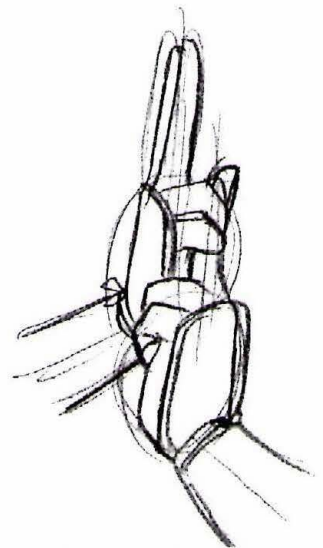
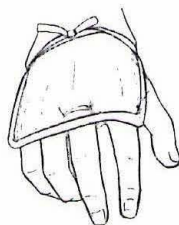
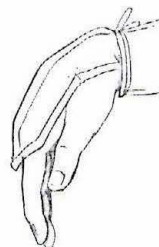
Scared—The eyes appear to be half in shock. The irises and pupils are small. Unlike when "angry," the corners of the eyes slope downward.

Glaring—Draw the eyes as narrowed slits, keeping the upper eyelids horizontal to produce a frosty look. The irises and pupils are small.

Hand Basics

Male Character's Hand:
The hands are wide, bony, and knotted. The wrists are proportionally thick in comparison with the hands' width.

Female Character's Hand:
Avoid showing the skeletal structure as much as feasible. The fingers are long and slender. The wrists are thin.

Hands of a Sorcerer Ninja:
The hands are large, and the nails are sharp like the claws of an animal. Making the hands bony and with little flesh enhances the sense of eeriness.

Fingers of a Male Character's Hand:
The nails are squarish, and the large joints protrude. The fingers are meaty.

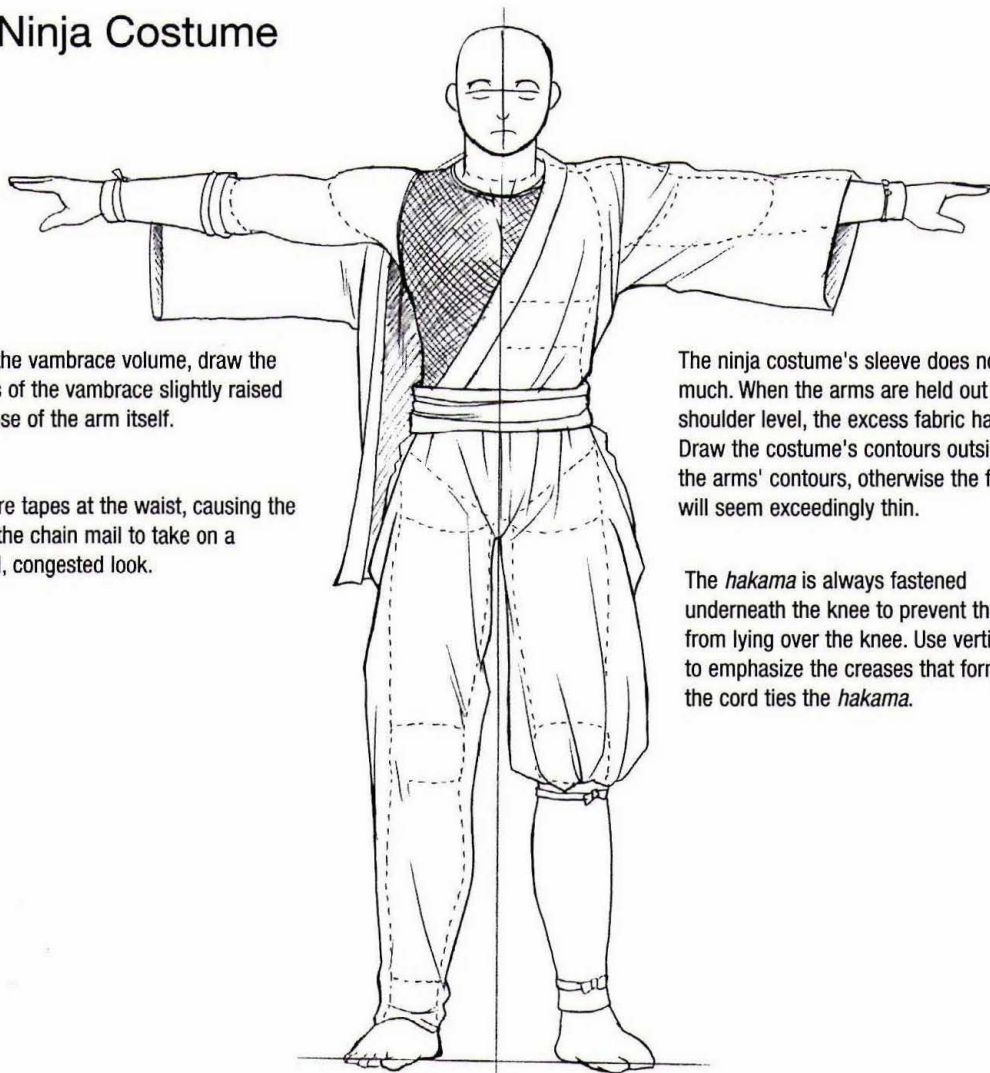
Fingers of a Female Character's Hand:
The nails are long ovals. Showing the nails' tips extending moderately beyond the tips of the fingers themselves has an elegant effect.

Ninja Gauntlet Make-up
The gauntlet comprises a metacarpal and a vambrace. The metacarpal has a cord, which attaches at the middle finger. The vambrace portion widens at the end.

The cords wrap around the gauntlet to hold it in place.

Hardly any creases appear near the cords that hold the gauntlet to the arm.

Here we see the hand of a ninja about to conjure a *ninjutsu* spell. The hand denotes that *ninjutsu* (the art of the ninja or stealth) is about to be used.

When viewing the back of the hand, the thumb is either shown extended straight or bent.

Miscellaneous Hands: When drawing the hand's layout, establish the wrist's center and pay careful attention to the hand's size, the palm, the fingers, and the wrist's girth.

Here we see the ninja's hands brought together for a *ninjutsu* incantation. The hand with the middle finger and index finger extended is held, wrapped by the other hand.

Draw the gauntlet as if wrapping around the arm adhering to the arm's positioning. Picture a cylinder as you draw.

The cord is knotted midway on the outside of the arm.

The cord attached to the metacarpal fits around the base of the middle finger.

Draw the metacarpal so that it does not appear to squeeze the hand.

Alternative *Ninjutsu* Gesture: Both hands have extended fingers, but one hand is held higher than the other, and the higher hand grips the fingers of the lower hand.

Various Ninja Costumes

Within this volume, aspects and identifying features found in the ninjas' costumes are emphasized in order to distinguish between the various types of ninja. This section covers an assortment of ninja costume details.

Iga Ninja Costume

To give the vambrace volume, draw the contours of the vambrace slightly raised from those of the arm itself.

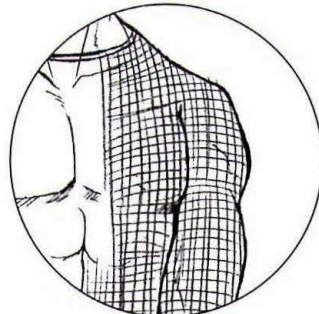
The figure tapes at the waist, causing the links of the chain mail to take on a crowded, congested look.

The ninja costume's sleeve does not flare much. When the arms are held out to shoulder level, the excess fabric hangs. Draw the costume's contours outside of the arms' contours, otherwise the fabric will seem exceedingly thin.

The *hakama* is always fastened underneath the knee to prevent the cord from lying over the knee. Use vertical lines to emphasize the creases that form where the cord ties the *hakama*.

Drawing the Chain Mail

The mail is typically drawn with a rounded collar and long sleeves. The mail fits closely against the body, adhering to the same contours as the torso. The chain mail links should be drawn following the undulations of the torso underneath. Use strokes drawn in two different directions for the mail.

Incorrect

The chain mail appears awkward if drawn vertically and horizontally like this.

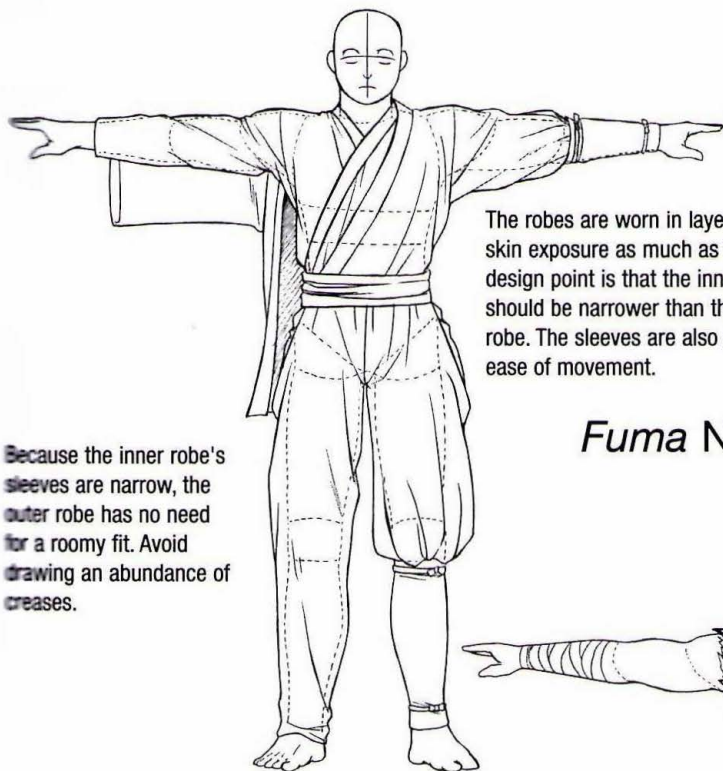
The Ninja Hood's Composition

The hood is made of a single, large piece of fabric.
Use vertical lines for the creases on the head and horizontal lines for those at the neck.

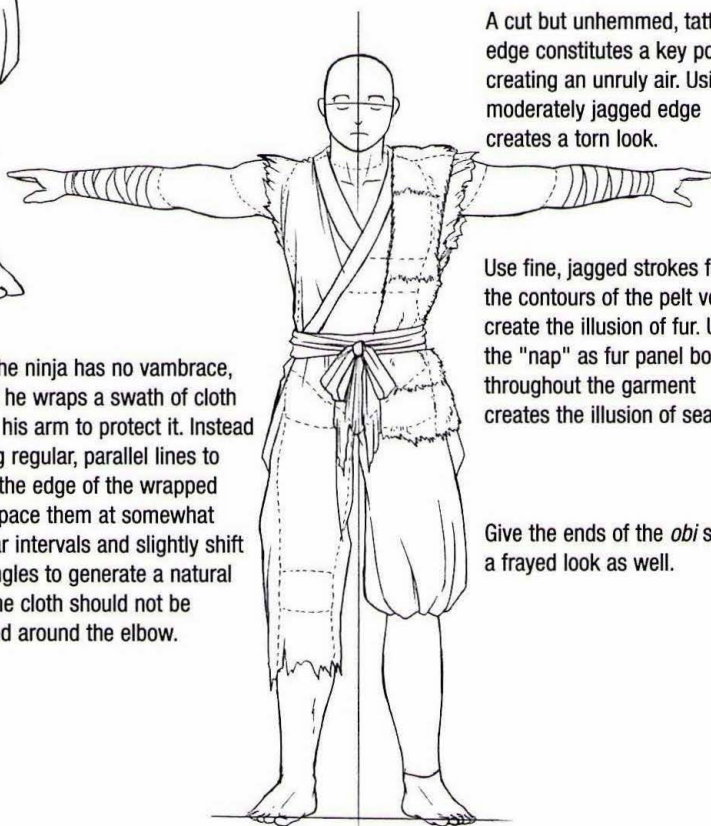
The mask is put on before the hood. The mask covers the face from the mouth to the nose.

The hood covers the head completely.

The hood is fastened at the neck.

Koga Ninja Costume

The robes are worn in layers to minimize skin exposure as much as feasible. A key design point is that the inner robe's collar should be narrower than that of the outer robe. The sleeves are also slim to allow for ease of movement.

Because the inner robe's sleeves are narrow, the outer robe has no need for a roomy fit. Avoid drawing an abundance of creases.

Fuma Ninja Costume

A cut but unhemmed, tattered edge constitutes a key point in creating an unruly air. Using a moderately jagged edge creates a torn look.

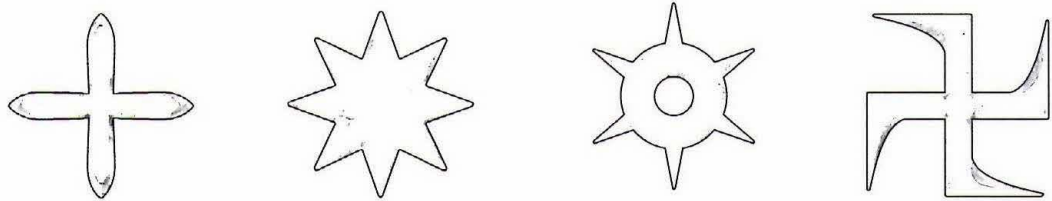
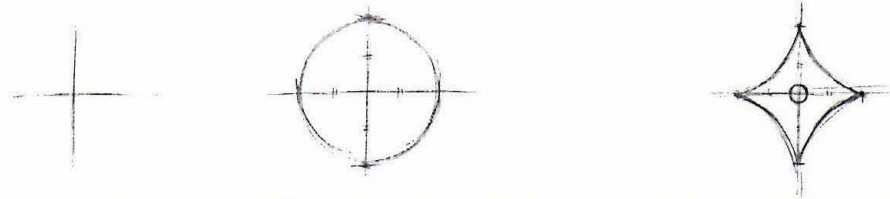
Use fine, jagged strokes for the contours of the pelt vest to create the illusion of fur. Using the "nap" as fur panel borders throughout the garment creates the illusion of seams.

When the ninja has no vambrace, instead he wraps a swath of cloth around his arm to protect it. Instead of using regular, parallel lines to render the edge of the wrapped cloth, space them at somewhat irregular intervals and slightly shift their angles to generate a natural look. The cloth should not be wrapped around the elbow.

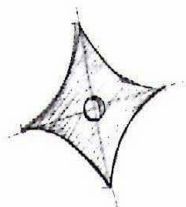
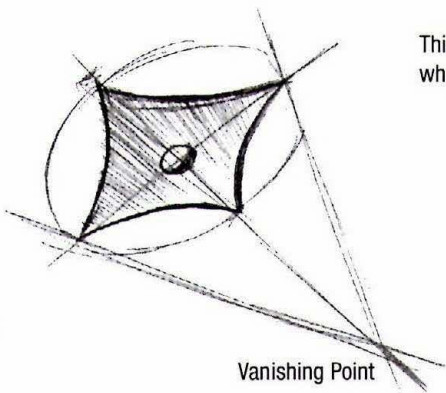
Give the ends of the *obi* sash a frayed look as well.

Ninja Props

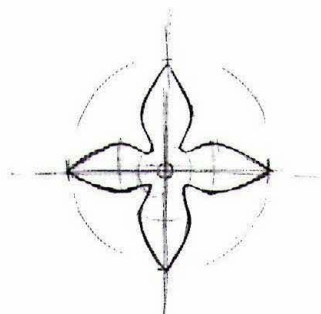
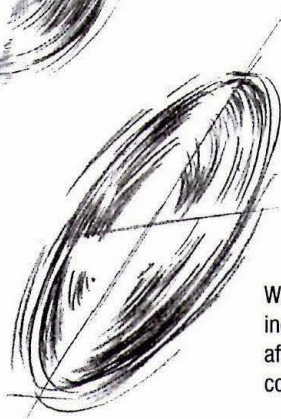
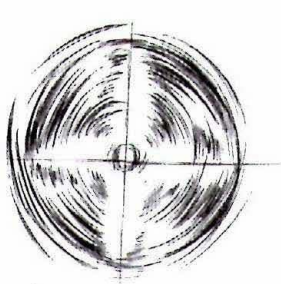
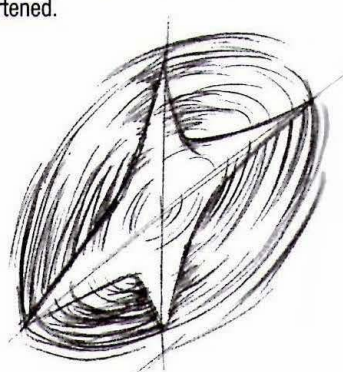
Shuriken

The *shuriken* is the most famous of the ninja's weapons. *Shuriken*, which are thrown, come in a variety of shapes and are generally the size of a palm.

Drawing a *Shuriken* (Square Throwing Blade)

1. The *shuriken* is a four-cornered, four-sided weapon. Decide where to draw corners and draw a cross.

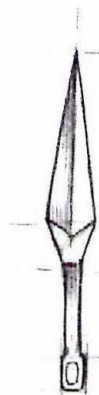
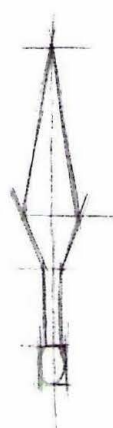
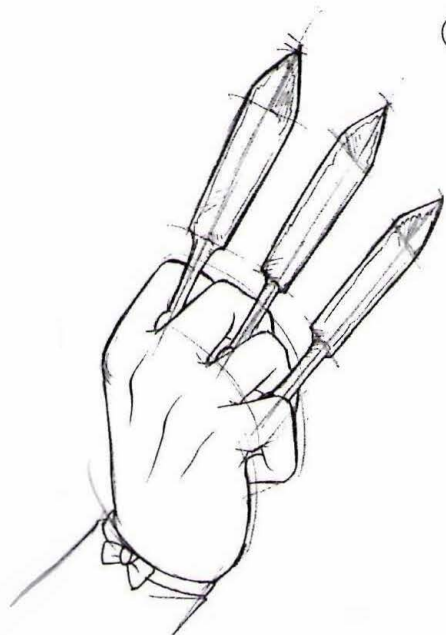
2. Draw a circle where the lines of the cross intersect. This will become define the *shuriken*'s size.

3. Draw arcs to connect the points where the lines of the cross touch the circle and then draw a small opening in the weapon's center. This completes the *shuriken*'s shape.

Drawing the layout on a diagonal produces a *shuriken* lying at an oblique angle. *Shuriken* are rarely depicted from straight on, so avoid composing from that angle.

Vanishing Point

This angle is frequently used when the *shuriken* is thrown.

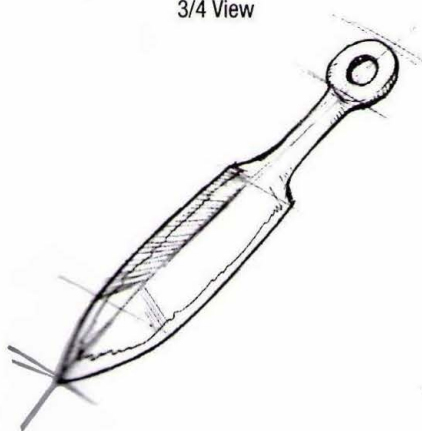
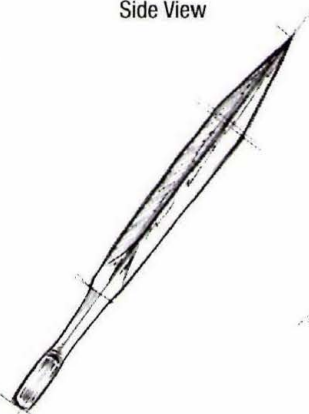
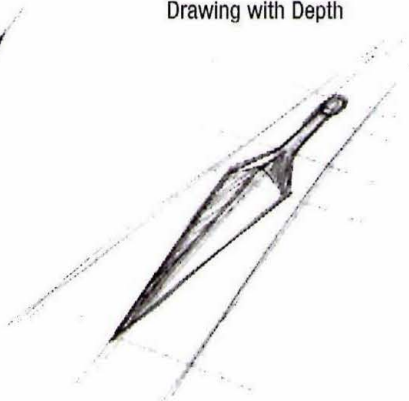
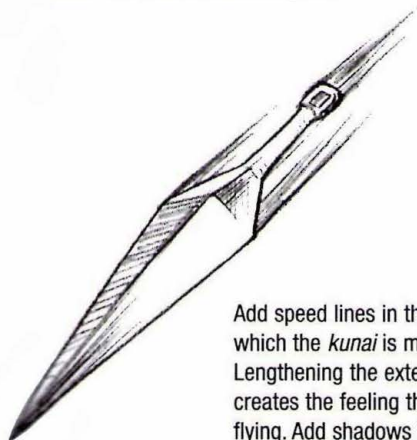
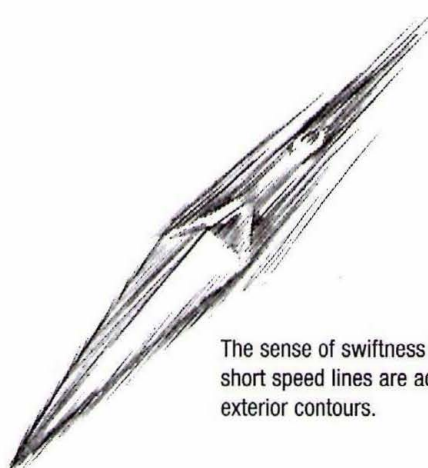
Connect the lines of the sketch layout to establish the vanishing point. Drawing shadows and speed lines originating from the vanishing point will make the weapon appear to have been thrown from that point. The distance from the *shuriken*'s corner closest to the vanishing point to its center is the shortest of the four points. The width of the weapon from right to left is not foreshortened.

To make the *shuriken* appear to be spinning in midair, use circles to denote speed, as if all four edges were connected. Use short lines for exterior contours lying in the direction that the weapon is rotating and long strokes for those on the opposite side. Eliminating a portion of the exterior contours that overlap the speed lines increases the sense of speed.

When the speed of rotation has increased, speed lines and the afterimage obscure the exterior contours.

Kunai

The *kunai* (knife) is also one of the ninja's most familiar weapons. When showing the ninja holding more than one *kunai* in his hand, show each *kunai* sandwiched between two fingers.

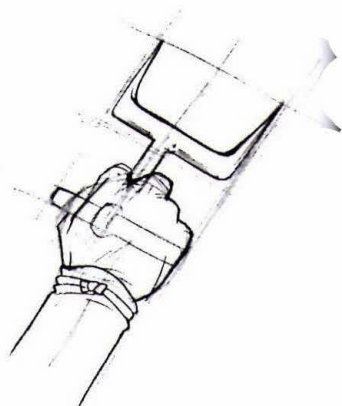
Drawing a *Kunai*

Draw a layout of the *kunai*, establishing the width of its blade.

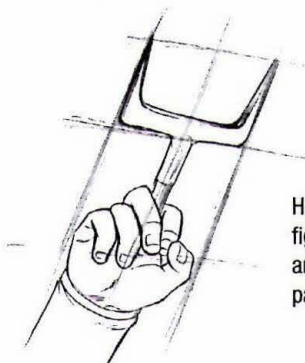
Define the shape in more detail using the layout as your point of departure.

Add shadows adhering to the knife's surface.

3/4 View

Side View

Drawing with Depth

Kunai with the Illusion of Speed

Add speed lines in the direction in which the *kunai* is moving. Lengthening the exterior lines creates the feeling that the knife is flying. Add shadows to the blade to impart a feeling of speed.

The sense of swiftness heightens if short speed lines are added to the exterior contours.

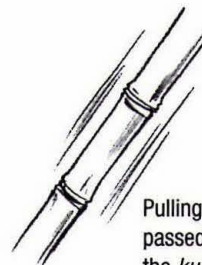
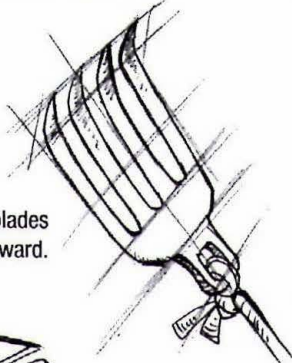
Other Ninja Weapons

A stick is passed through a hole on the tool's grip to make it easier to hold.

The tool is held by the stick passed through the hole.

This tool is used to open holes in wooden doors and walls.

Here we see the ninja ready to fight, composed from a low, 3/4 angle. Try to keep the hand parallel with the layout.

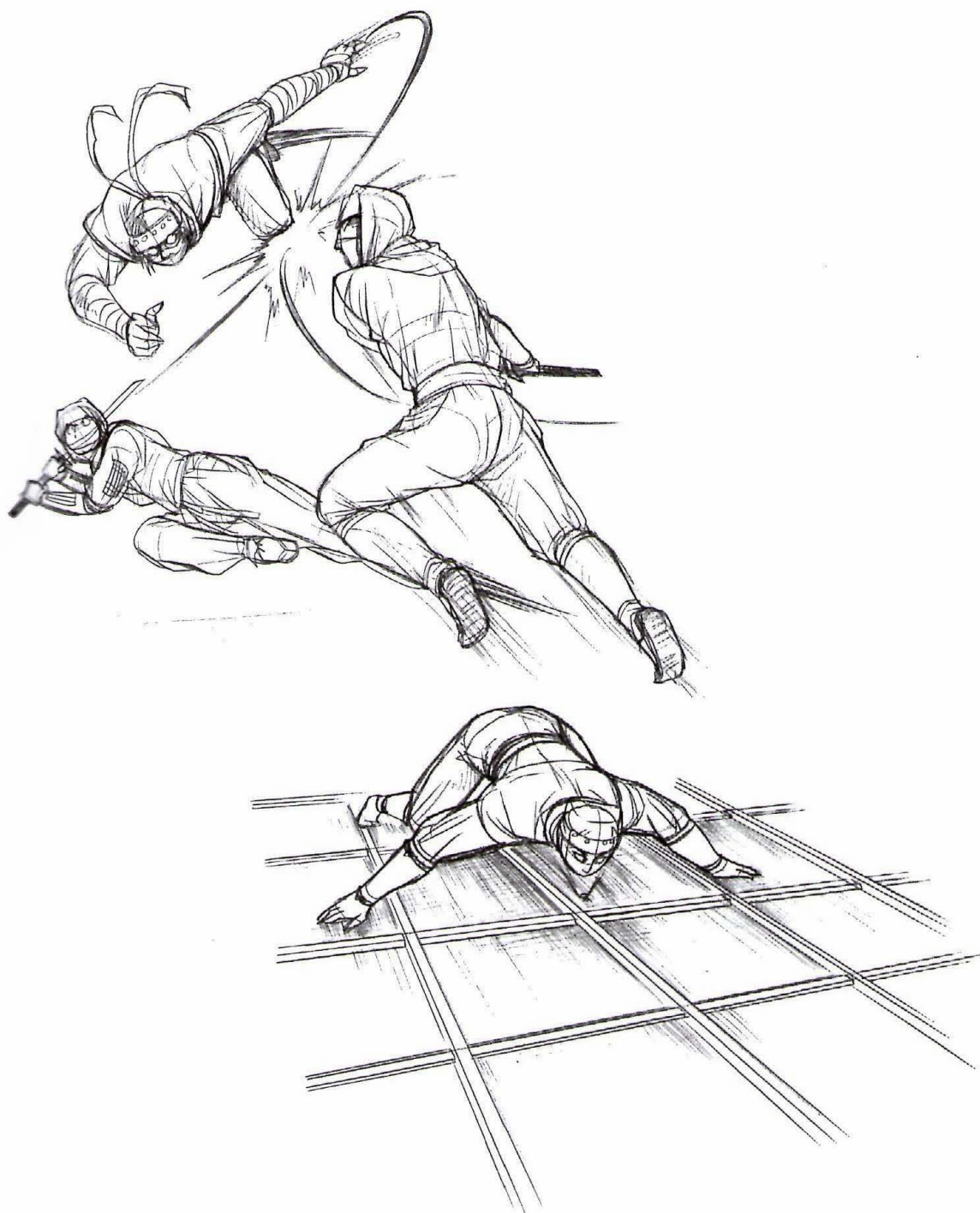
The cord is passed through the bamboo and is visible from between the bamboo pieces.

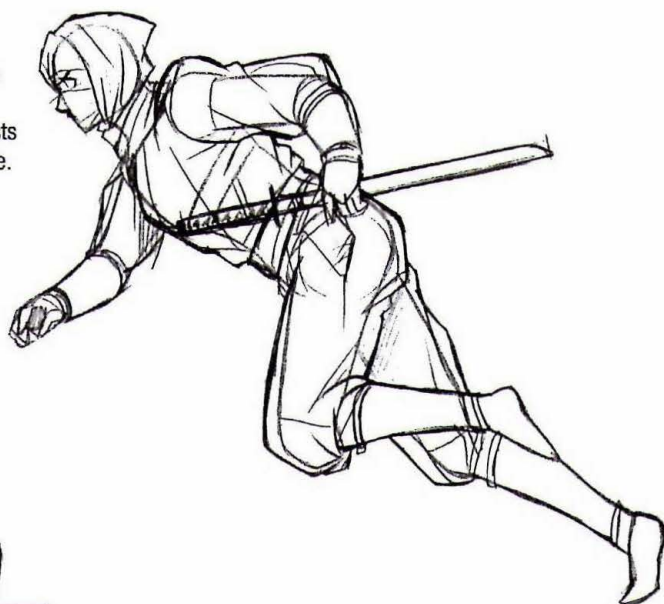
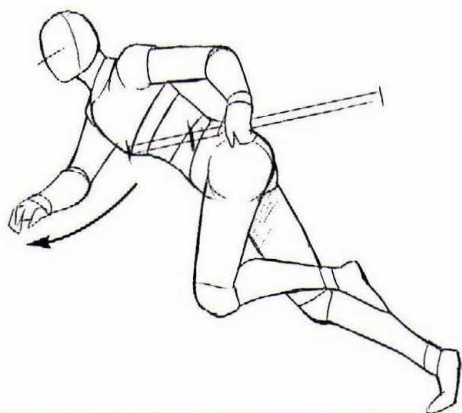
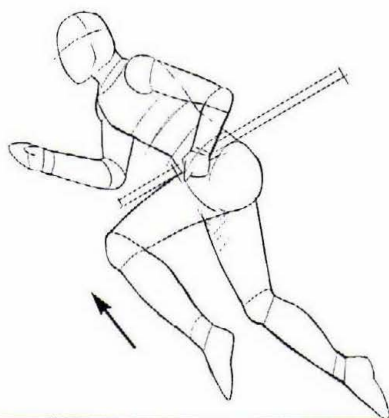
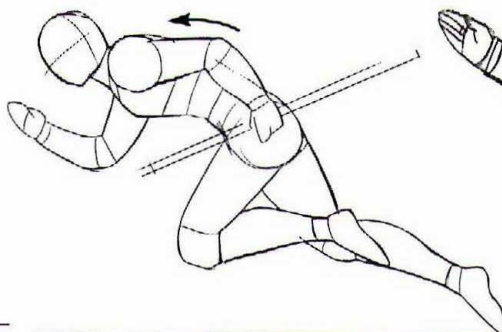
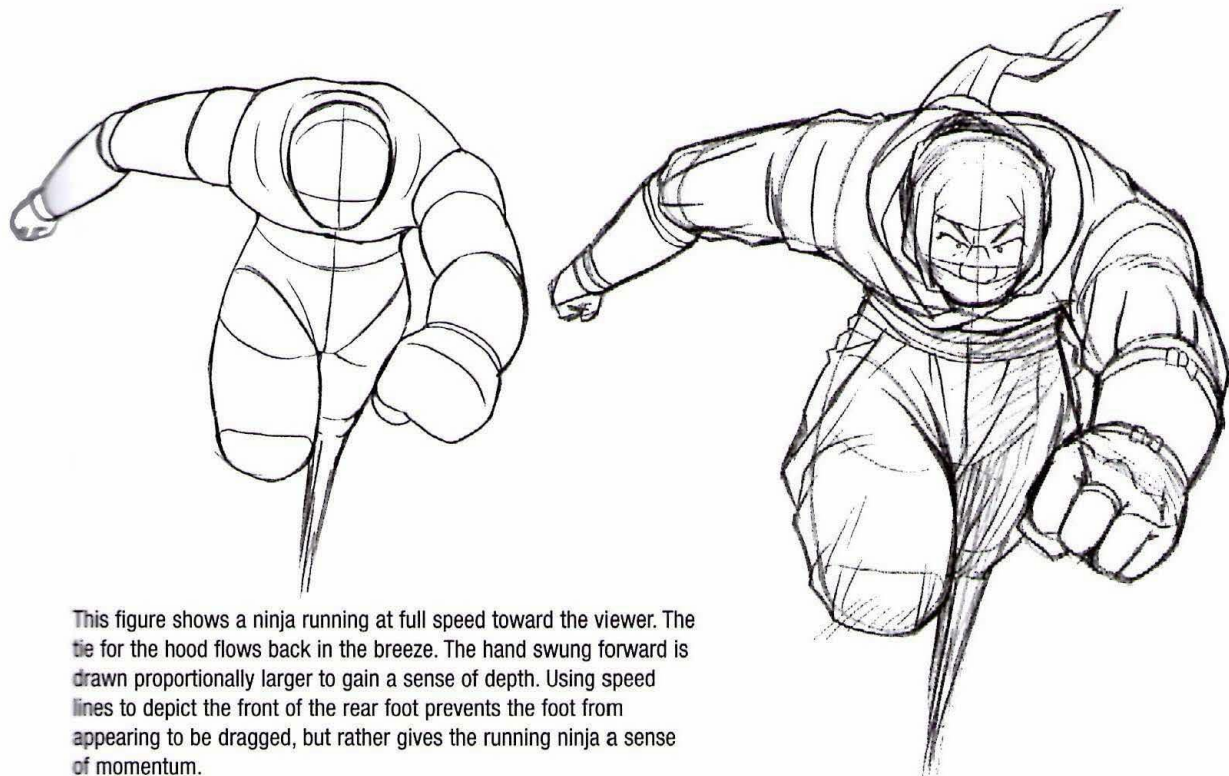
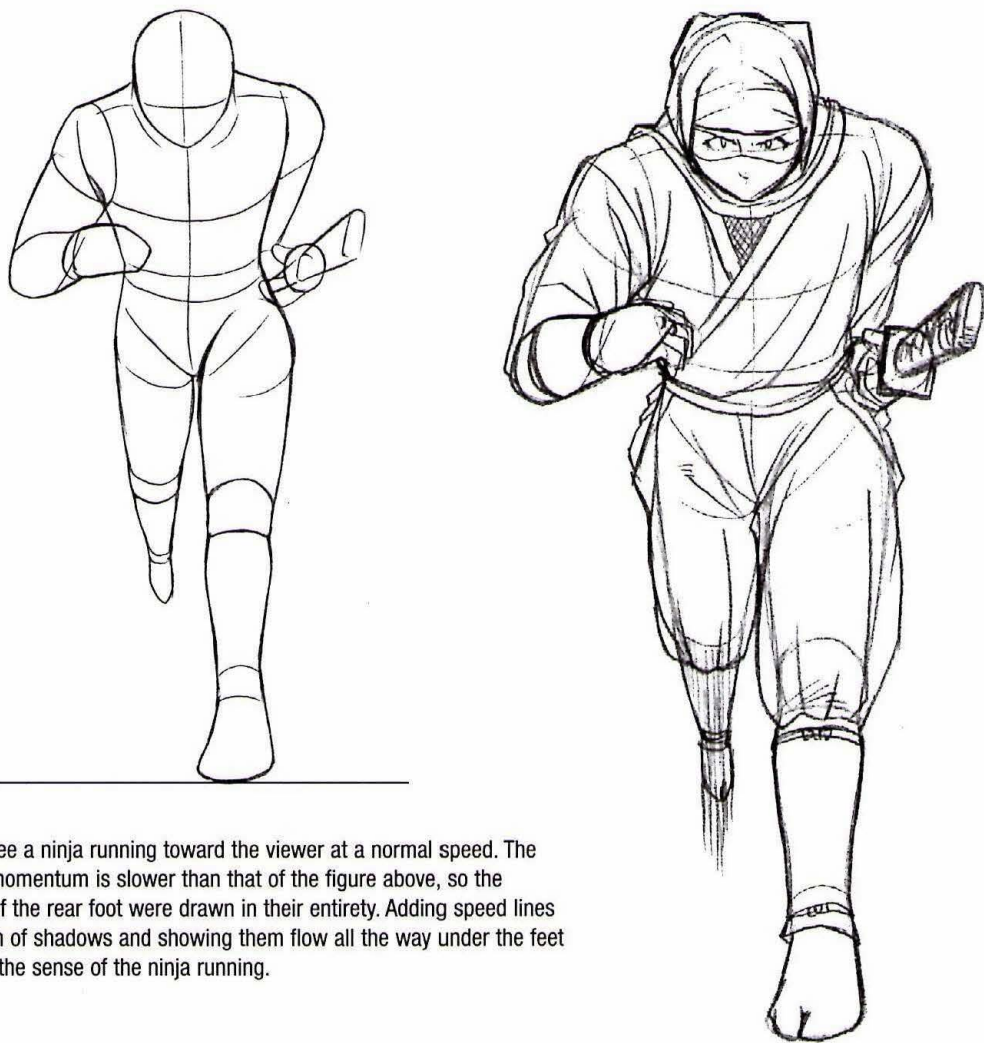
***Nagakumade*:**
Bamboo cut at the joints are attached using a cord and claw-like blades are added to the ends.

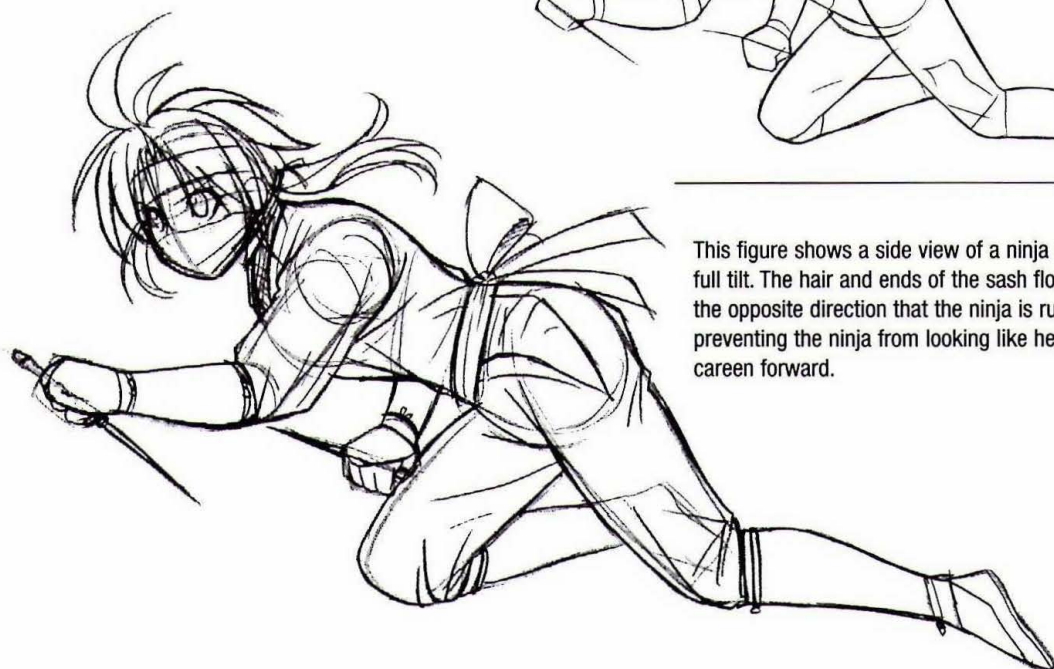
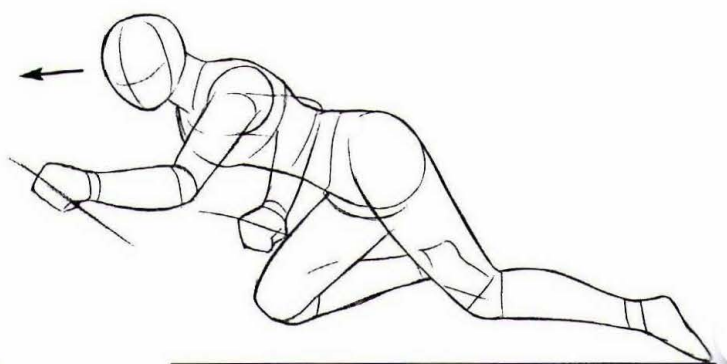
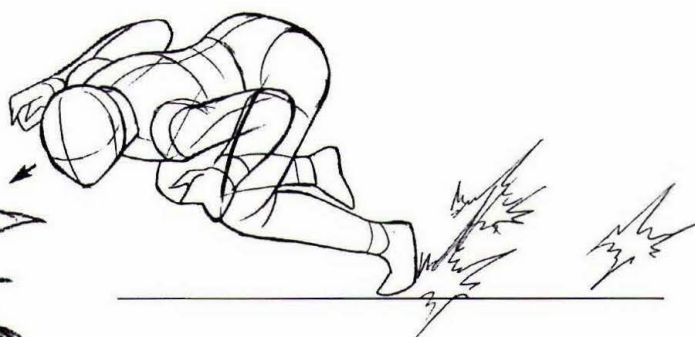
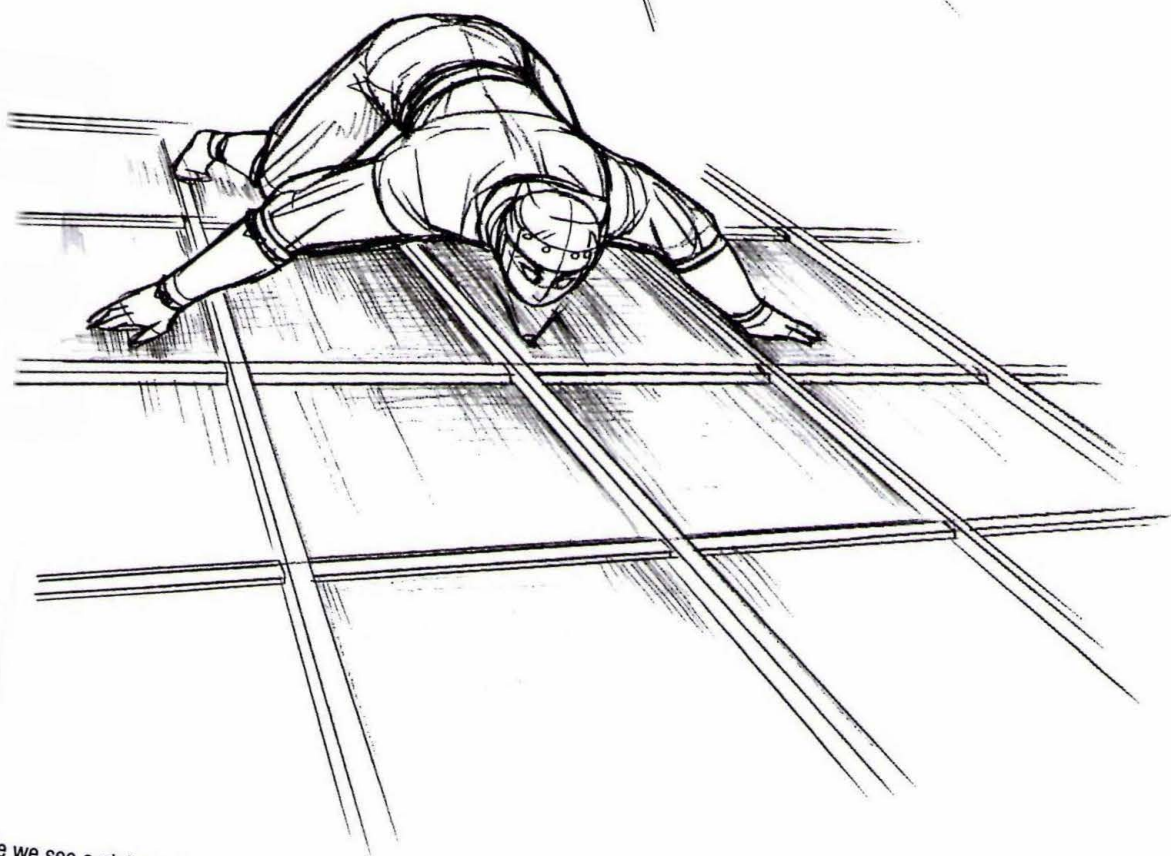
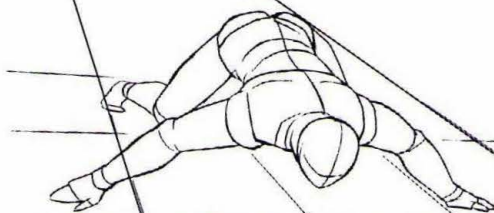
The *kumade*'s blades curve slightly inward.

Pulling on the end of the cord passed through the bamboo turns the *kumade*'s separated pieces of bamboo into a single, stiff pole.

Add circles to denote speed when showing the *kumade* swinging. Draw vertical lines radiating from the circle's center. Draw multiple heavy lines for the *kumade*'s afterimage. Making the lines darker than those on the circle's interior will create the impression that a heavy object is being swung.

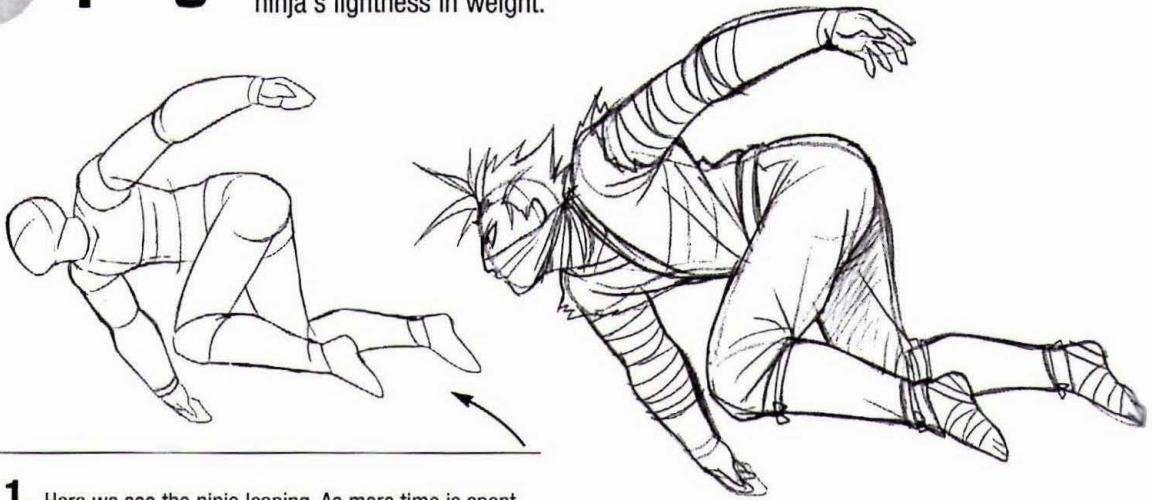
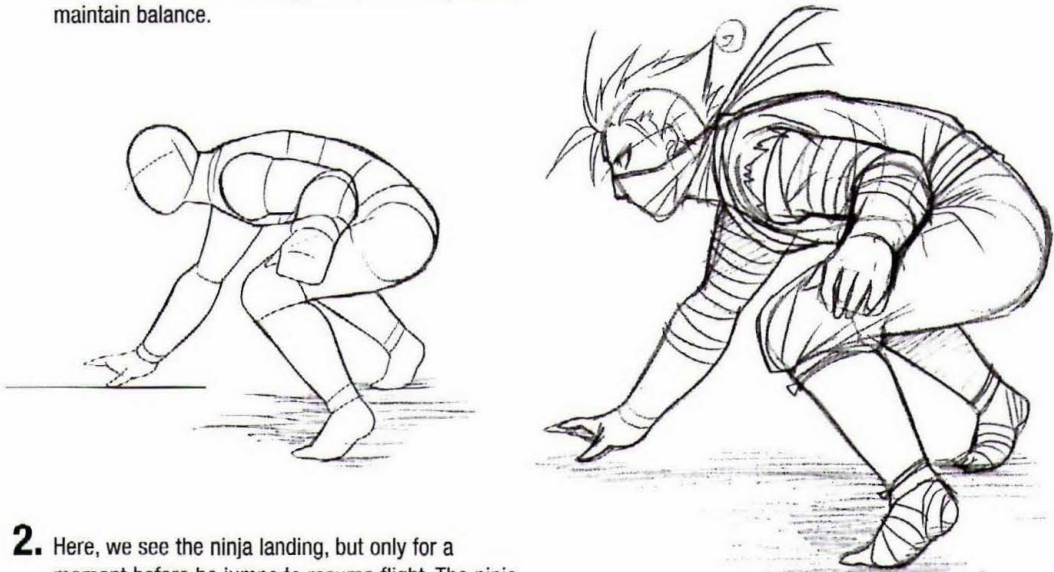
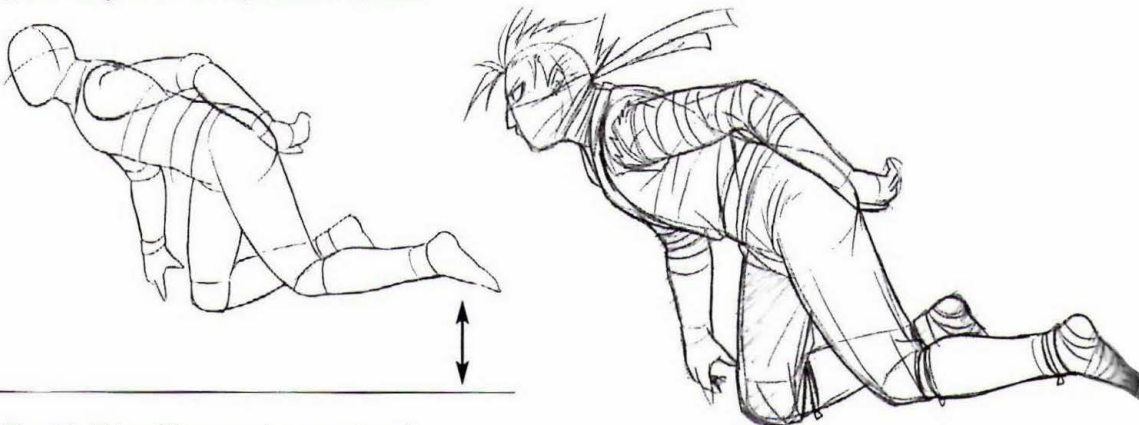
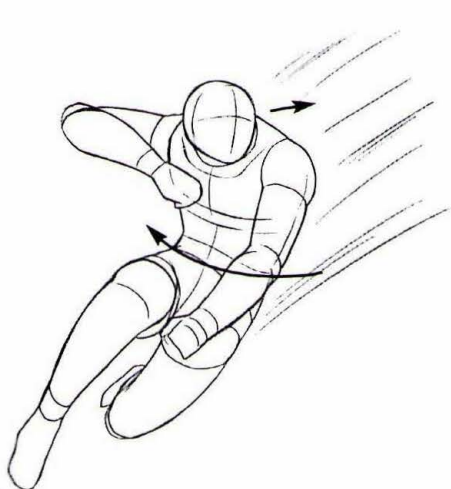
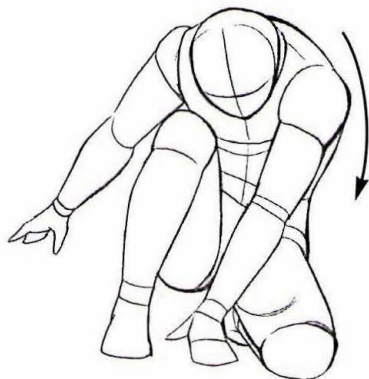
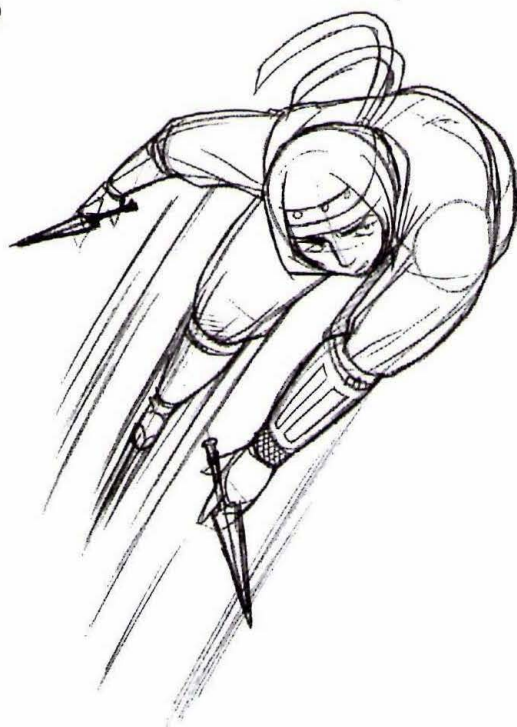
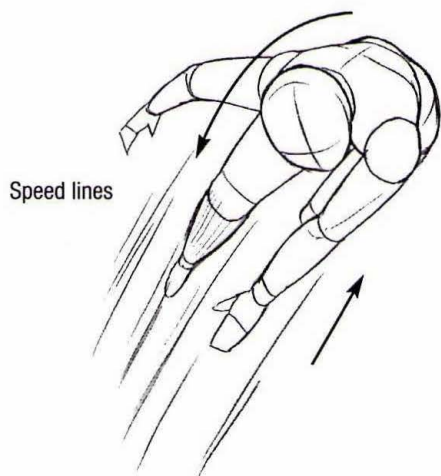
Swinging the *kumade* around requires significant muscle. The end of the bamboo knuckle at the grip forms the circle's center.

Chapter 2
Ninja in Motion

Running

1. Breaking into a Run: No tension appears yet in the hands. Position the arm being swung so as to achieve physical balance. As the ninja runs, he rests one hand on the scabbard to hold the sword stable.

2. This is the standard way to show a ninja running. The ninja runs on his toes with only the very tips touching the ground. He does not spread his legs wide apart, but does raise his knees high. He holds his arms straight at the elbow.

3. Here, the ninja increases his speed. Draw the head facing down and the feet parallel to the ground plane.

This figure shows a ninja running at full speed toward the viewer. The tie for the hood flows back in the breeze. The hand swung forward is drawn proportionally larger to gain a sense of depth. Using speed lines to depict the front of the rear foot prevents the foot from appearing to be dragged, but rather gives the running ninja a sense of momentum.

Here we see a ninja running toward the viewer at a normal speed. The sense of momentum is slower than that of the figure above, so the contours of the rear foot were drawn in their entirety. Adding speed lines in the form of shadows and showing them flow all the way under the feet enhances the sense of the ninja running.

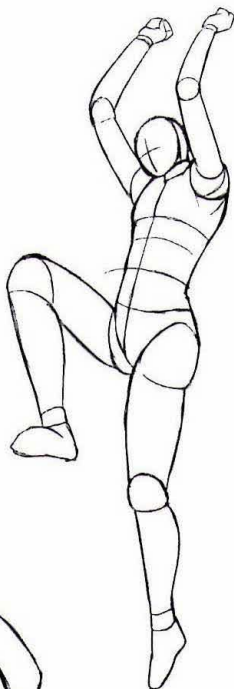
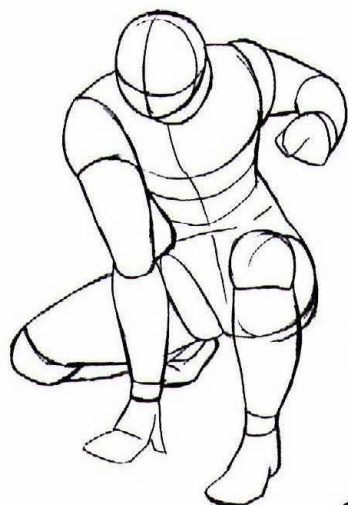
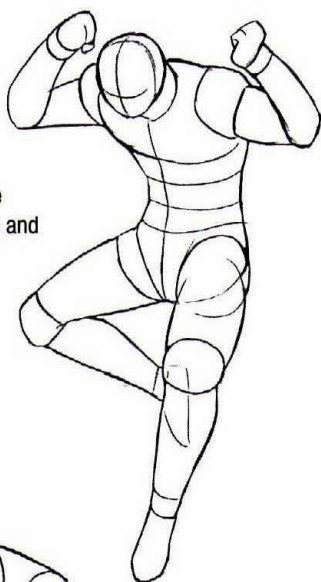
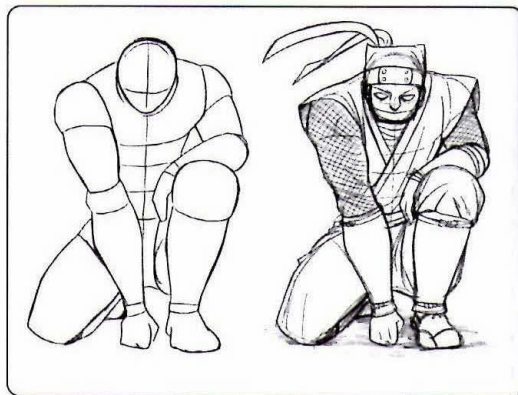
Running

This figure shows a side view of a ninja running at full tilt. The hair and ends of the sash flow back in the opposite direction that the ninja is running, preventing the ninja from looking like he is about to careen forward.

This figure shows a ninja holding his body low to the ground, running as if about to attack. The stride is short, but the feet strike firmly against the ground. The posture is low, but the face looks forward. Draw "sparks" to show where the feet have struck the ground. Adding speed lines to the front of the feet and blurring the contours heightens the sense of speed.

Peering Down

ere we see a ninja peering into a room from the other side of a ceiling. When rawing this composition, first the perspective must be established. Sketch a grid for e ceiling's underside. Draw the ninja based on the grid's perspective. Keep the hole ened in the ceiling panel on the small side. Use diagonal, protruding strokes to pict light from the room shining through the whole. Draw vertical and horizontal s adhering to the ceiling grid to create the feeling of ceiling panels. Shadows uld appear underneath the figures, so make those areas particularly dark.

Leaping

This activity underscores the ninja's lightness in weight.

1. Here we see the ninja leaping. As more time is spent in midair than when running, the arms are spread to maintain balance.

2. Here, we see the ninja landing, but only for a moment before he jumps to resume flight. The ninja uses one hand to maintain balance. The other hand grazes the ground. The ninja lands on his toes.

3. The ninja kicks off the ground once again and resumes flight.

1. Here we see the ninja battling an enemy. The ninja lands holding his *kunai*, ready to attack. The ninja turns his face toward his enemy. The upper body assumes a battle-ready stance, readying the *kunai* for attack, while the lower body is turned in the direction that the ninja lands.

2. Show the ninja touching the ground with one hand as if to lesson the impact when landing. The face is turned down somewhat, but the gaze always remains fixed on the enemy.

3. Adding speed lines underneath the feet evokes the sense of the ninja jumping up. Adding speed lines to his back creates the sense of the ninja descending.

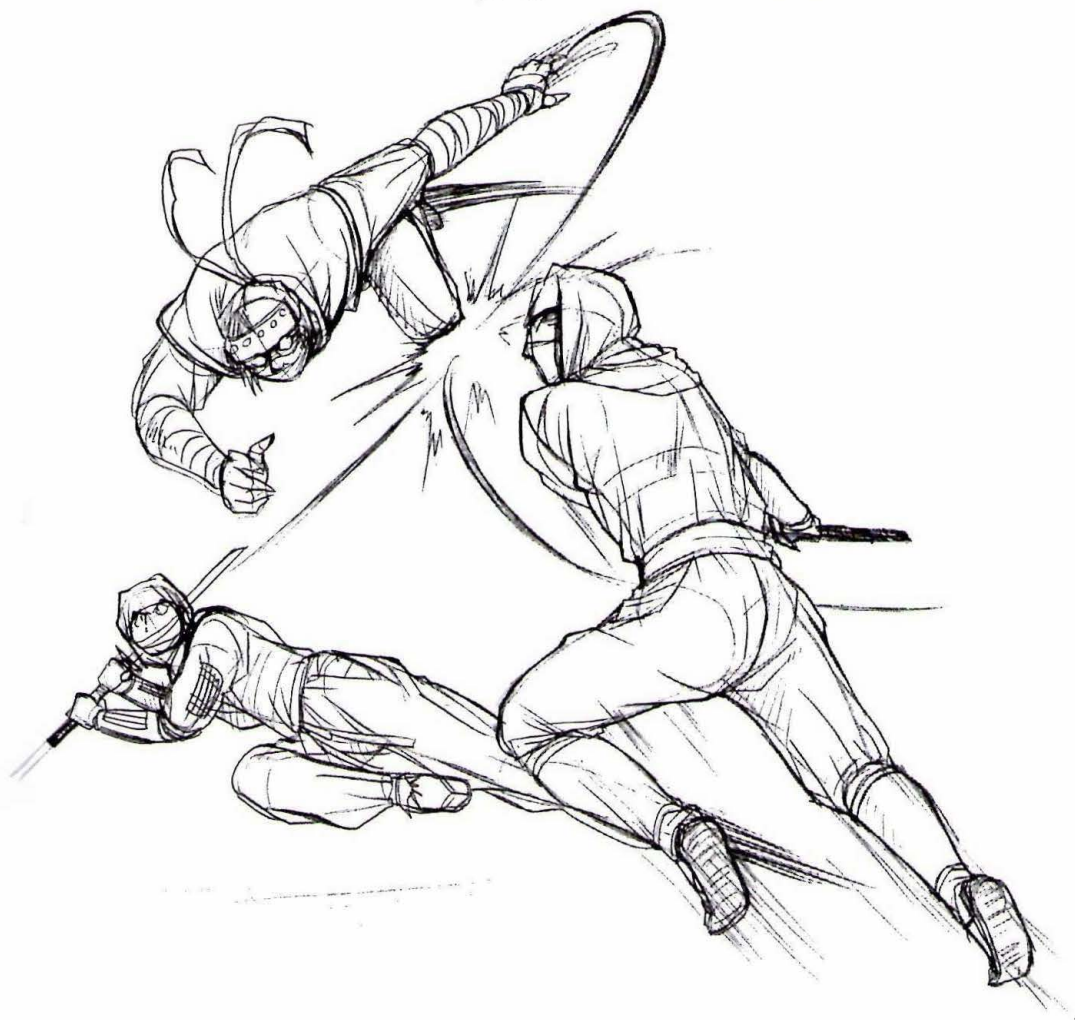
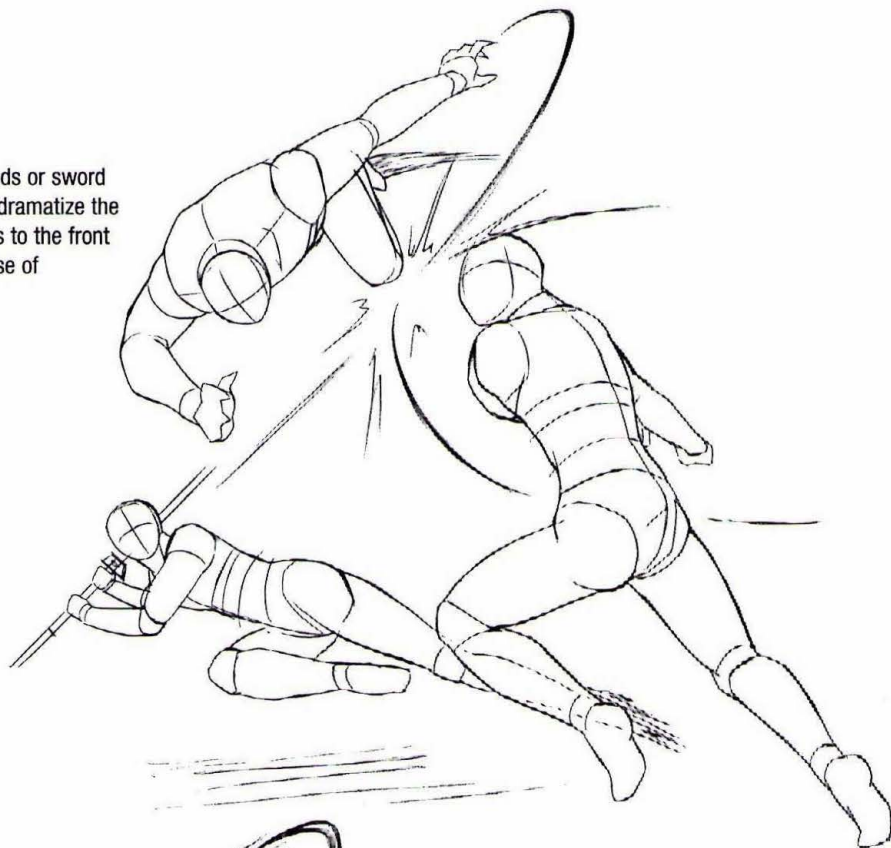
Leaping

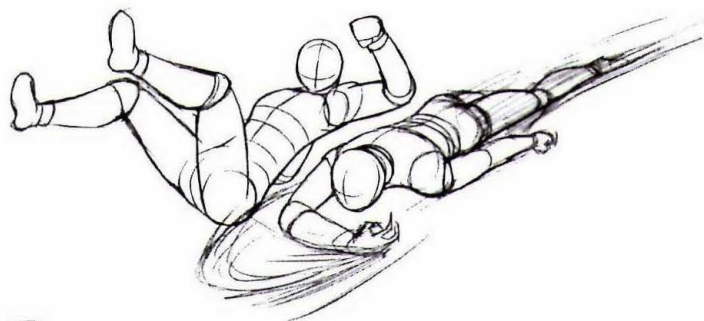
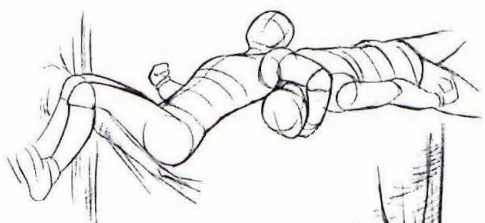
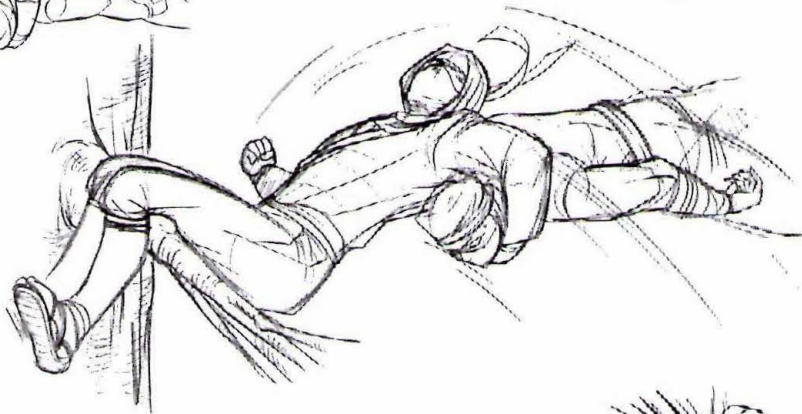
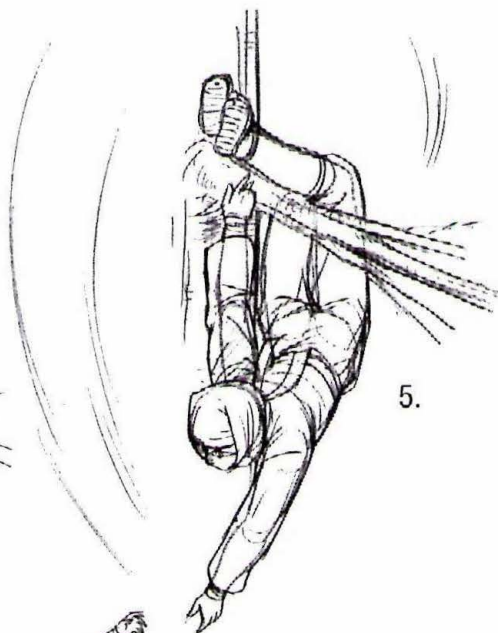
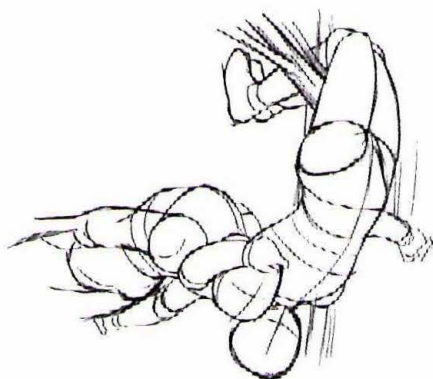
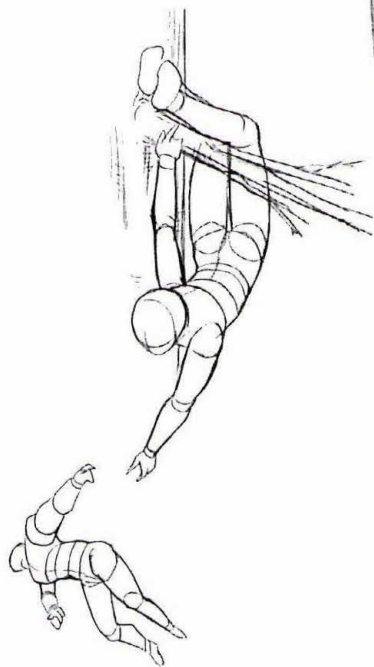
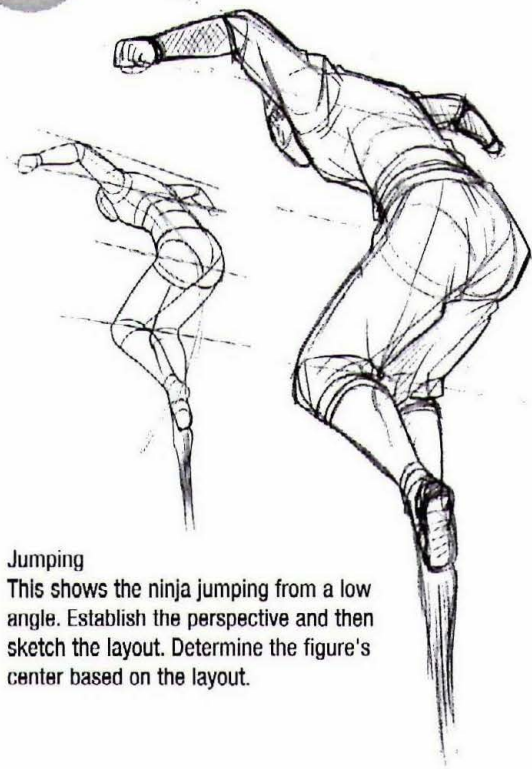
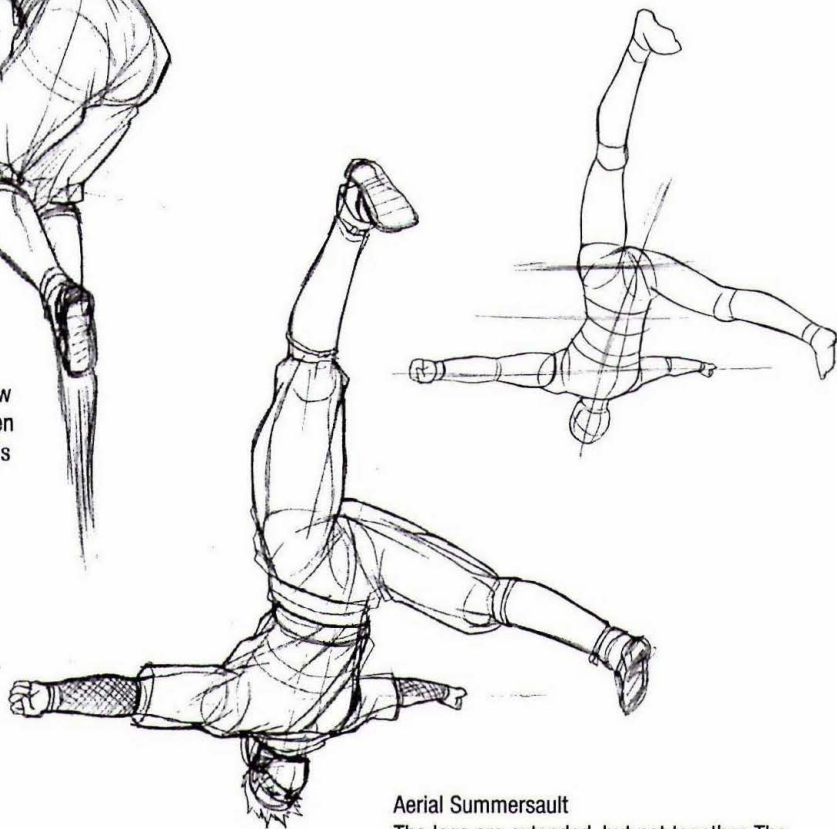
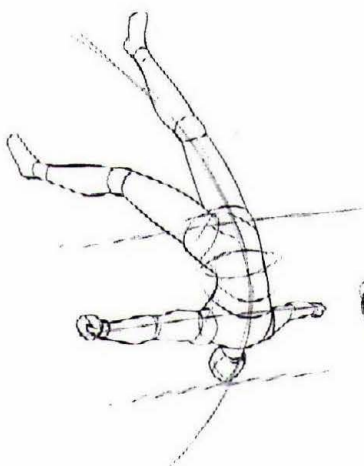
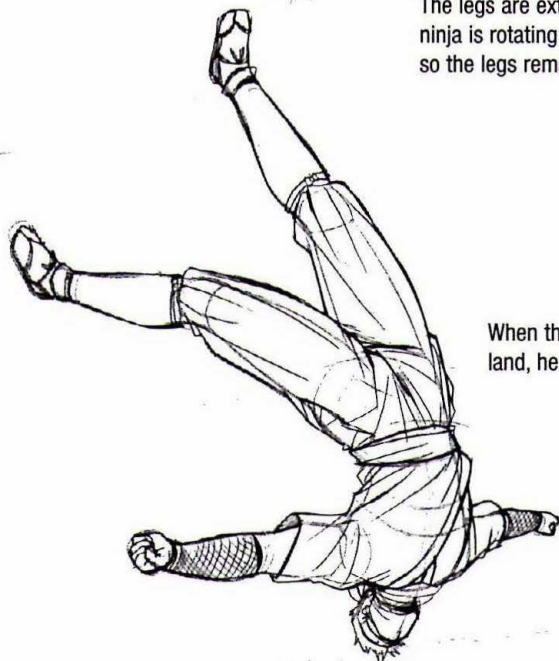
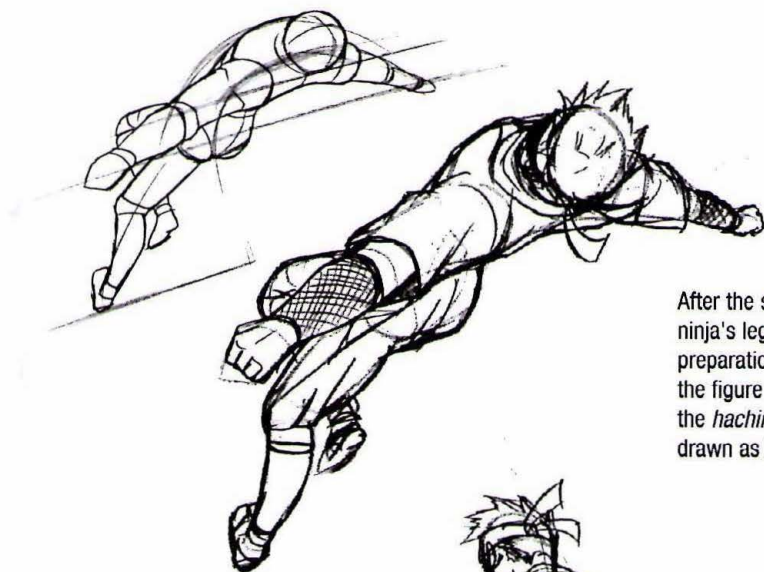
Here we see the ninja landing.

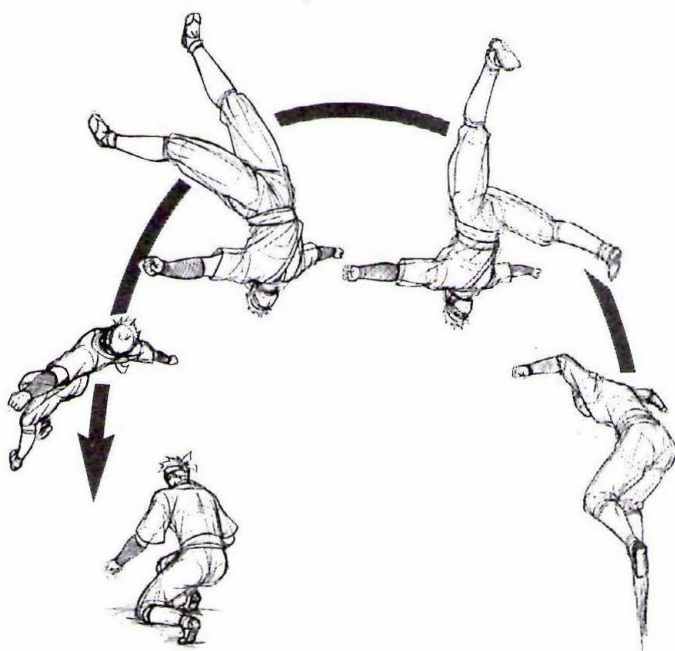
The first figure raises both arms and extends one leg.

As the ninja approaches the ground, he bends his knees and lowers his arms.

The ninja should always be shown assuming a crouching position when landing. At this point, showing the ninja leaning forward would make him appear unbalanced and off-kilter.

Combat

Two against One

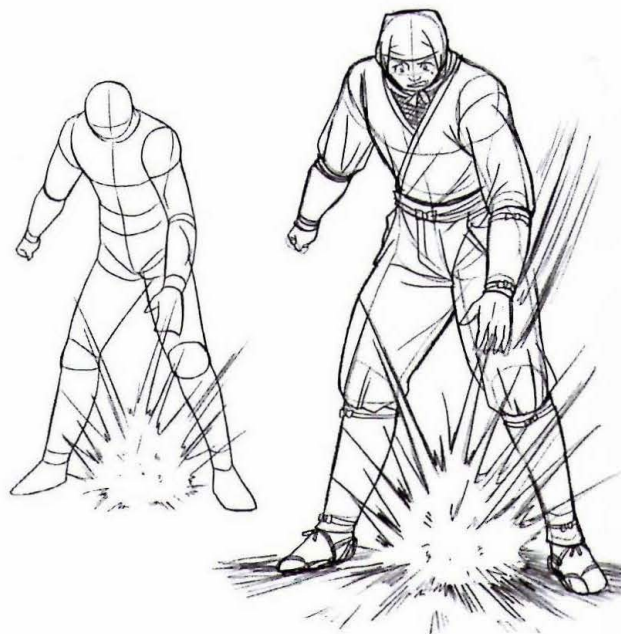
Draw the path followed by the hands or sword when swung and use "sparks" to dramatize the point of impact. Adding speed lines to the front of legs being swung evokes a sense of dynamism.

Combat

One-on-One without Weapons

Note the shape of speed lines and how they are applied. Straight speed lines are used for direct movements, while curved strokes are used for circular or arced motions.

3.
4.
5.

Acrobatic Movements

Jumping
This shows the ninja jumping from a low angle. Establish the perspective and then sketch the layout. Determine the figure's center based on the layout.

Aerial Summersault
The legs are extended, but not together. The ninja is rotating in a forward-leaning position, so the legs remain in front at this point.

When the ninja prepares to land, he arcs his back.

After the summersault is complete, the ninja's legs are almost aligned in preparation for landing. Note that since the figure is still in midair, the ends of the *hachimaki* headband should be drawn as if lifted by the wind.

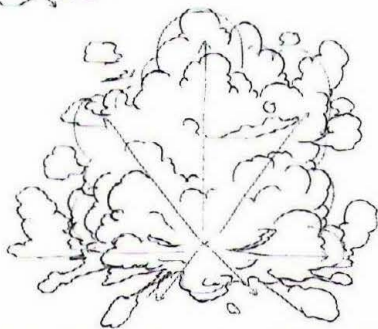
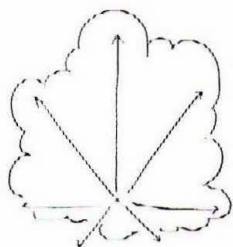
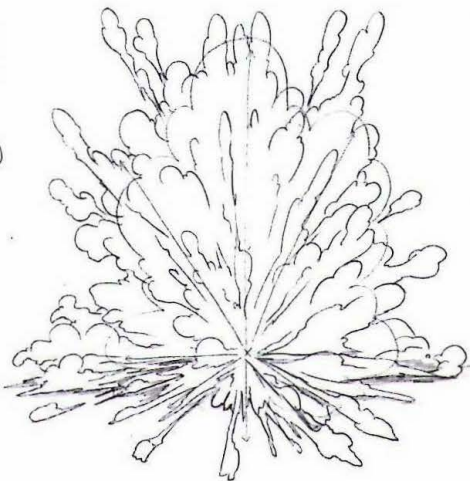
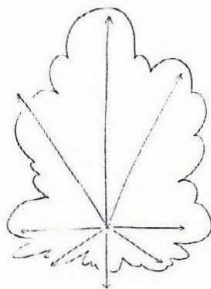
When landing, the ninja resumes a forward leaning posture.

Concealment

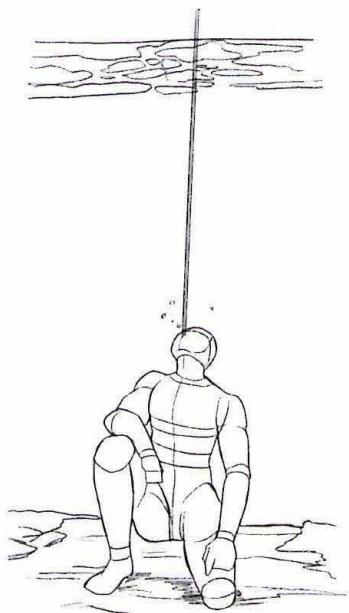
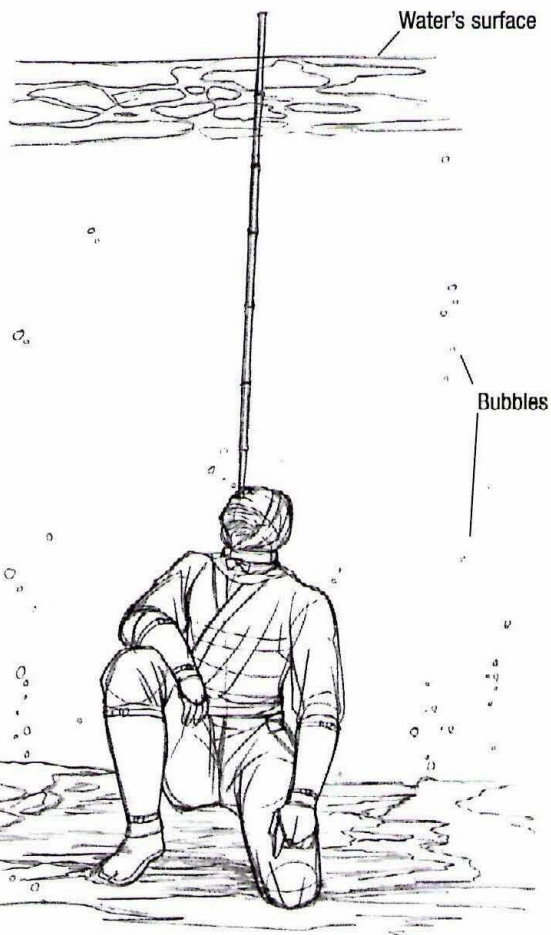
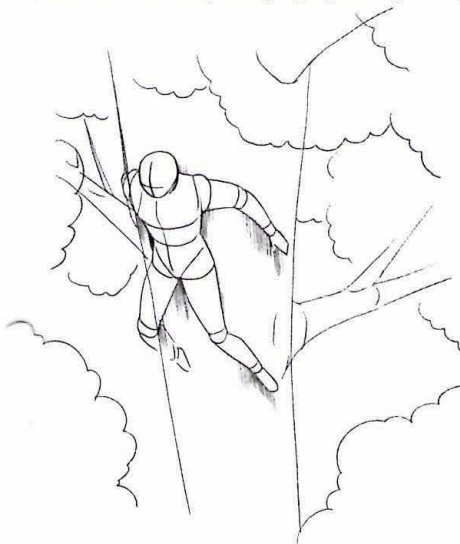
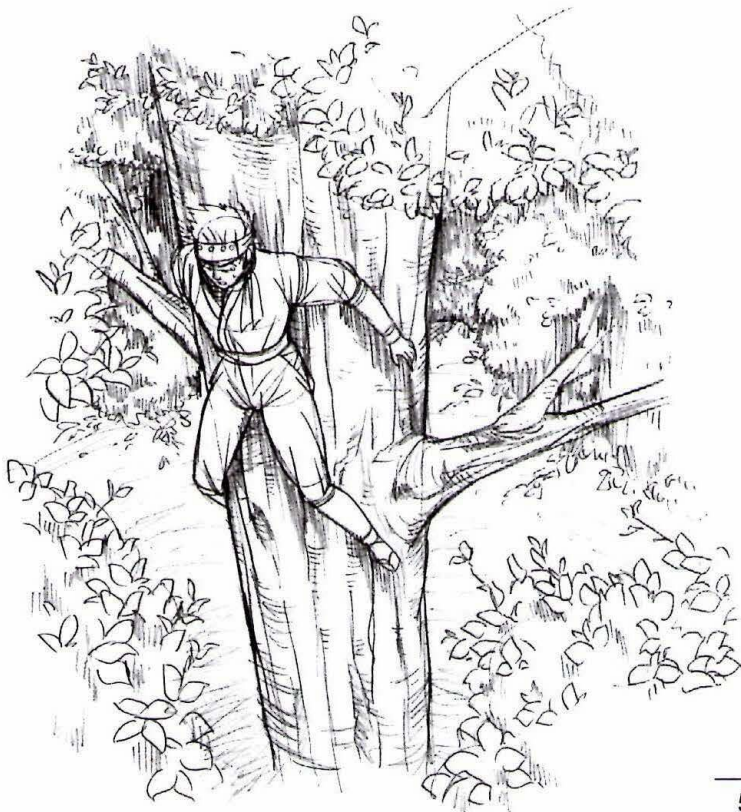
Here we see a ninja using a smoke bomb and hiding under water. The smoke bomb is one device ninja use to flee danger.

The smoke bomb emits smoke upon impact, allowing the ninja to cloud his opponent's eyes.

1. Here, the ninja is about to throw the smoke bomb on the ground. Since he is in flight and senses danger, his face wears a tense expression. The hand that does not hold a smoke bomb is tightened into a fist.

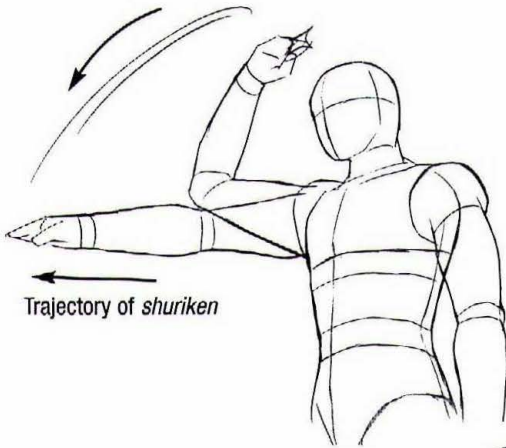
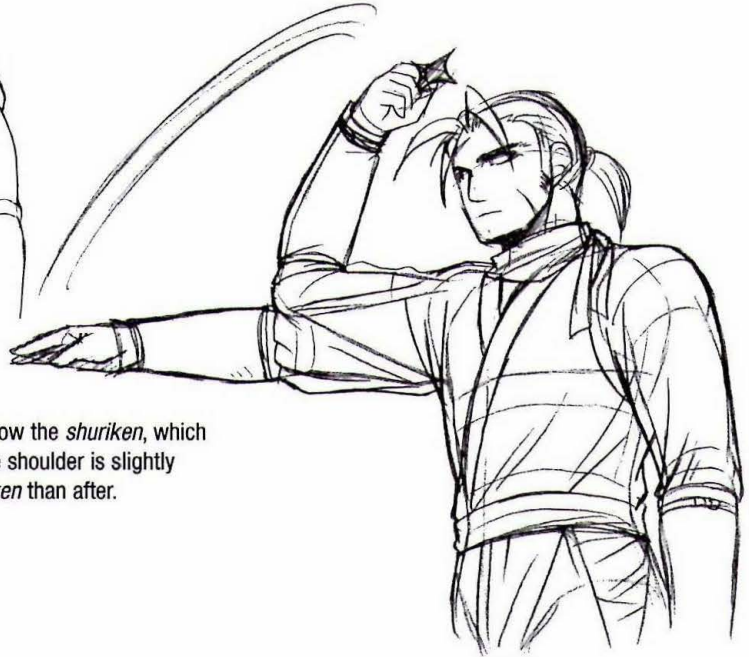
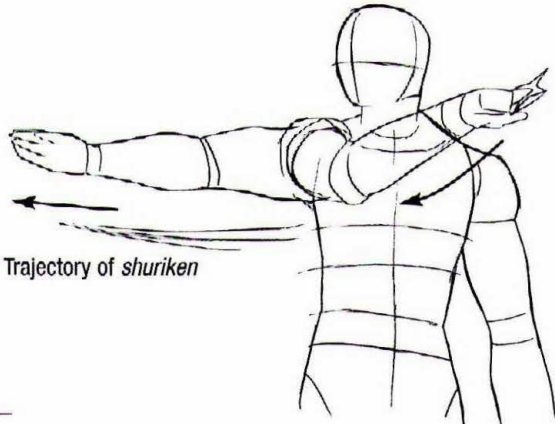
2. The ninja throws the smoke bomb against the ground. The arm that was raised swings forward, causing the other arm to swing back. Draw radiating lines of impact at the spot where the smoke bomb strikes the ground. Add similarly radiating lines around this area to suggest shadow.

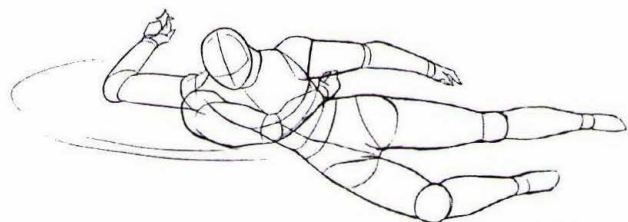
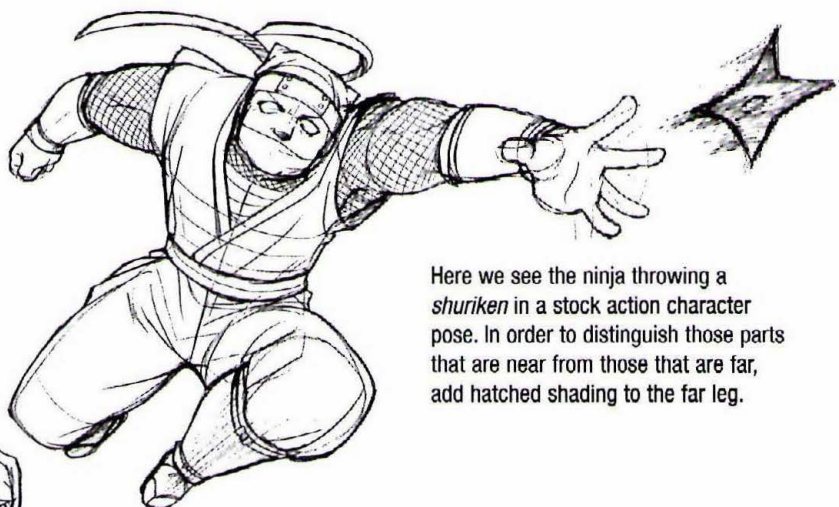
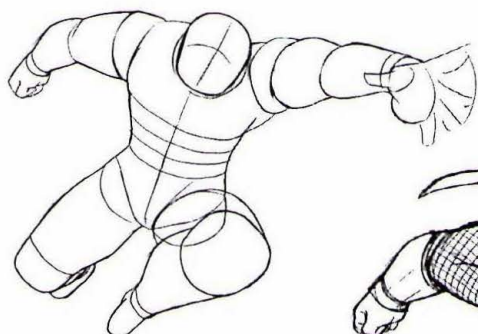
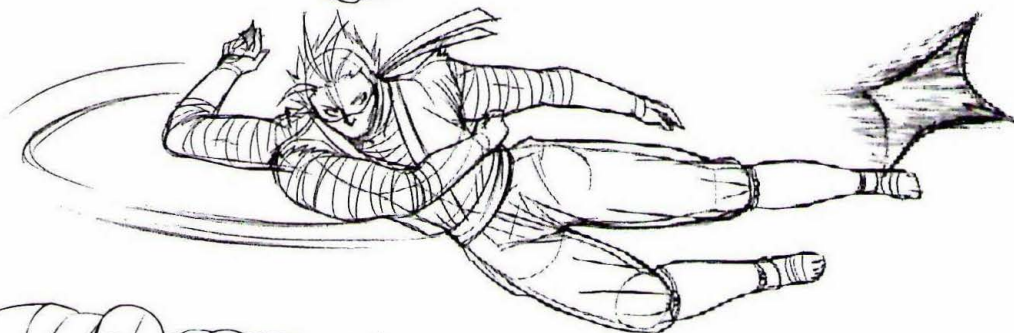
Drawing Smoke

There are two types of smoke. Both types spread in all directions from the point where the smoke bomb strikes the ground, but the smoke does not spread much along the ground

Small puffs of smoke are generated when the impact is small.

Here we see a layout sketch of smoke when the impact is hard. Smoke billows swiftly upward, climbing high.

Here we see a ninja hiding under water in a lake or marsh. The ninja opens a hole in a thin bamboo rod, pokes the makeshift tube above the water's surface, and breathes. From this perspective, the only facial features visible are the ninja's mouth and nose. Underneath the surface, tiny bubbles cluster in a vertical direction. Portray these bubbles using warped circles scattered about the water's surface.

Here we see a ninja concealing himself by clinging to a tree trunk, thereby escaping a pursuing enemy.

Draw the leaves near the picture plane on the large side, while making those distant small. Use vertical and horizontal strokes to portray the tree bark. First draw the vertical lines and then add fine horizontal lines. Try to fill in the details.

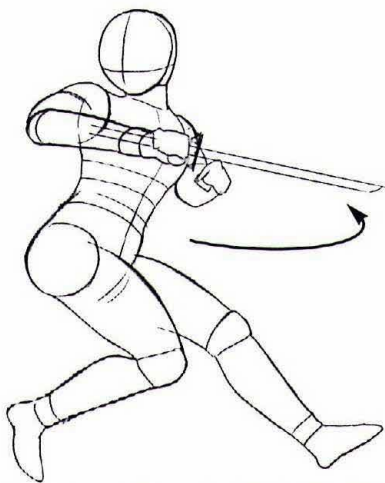
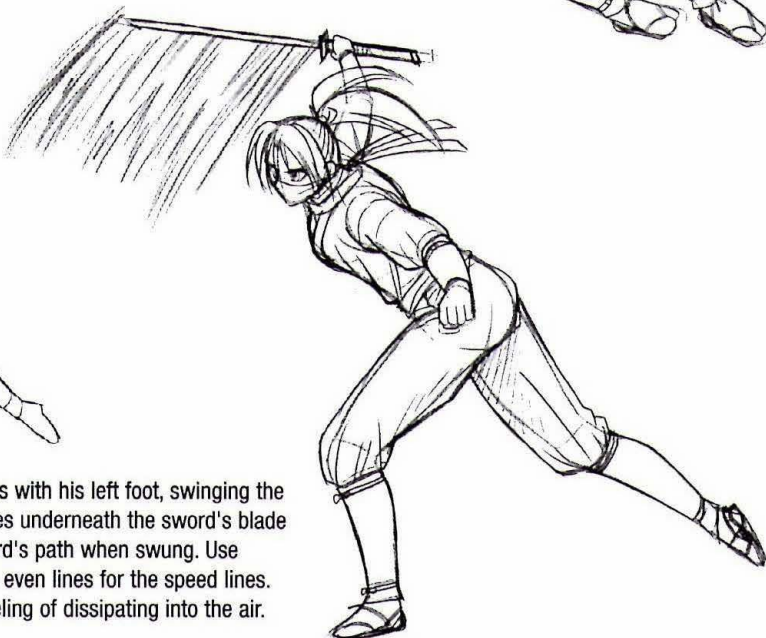
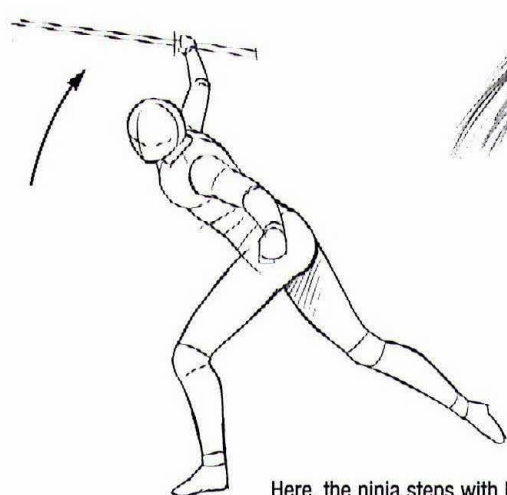
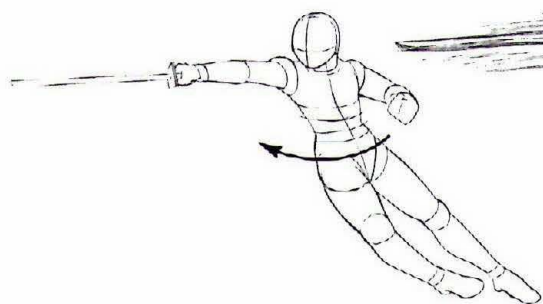
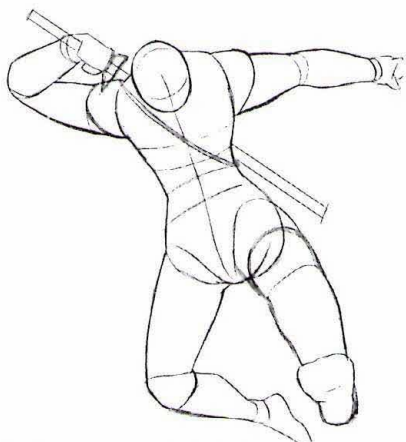
Throwing *Shuriken*

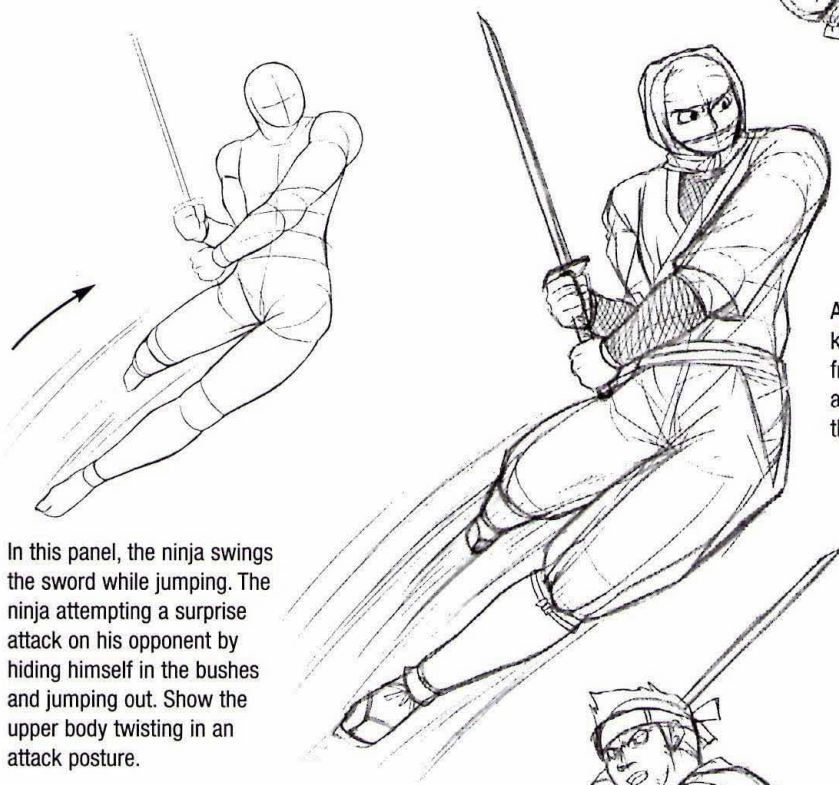
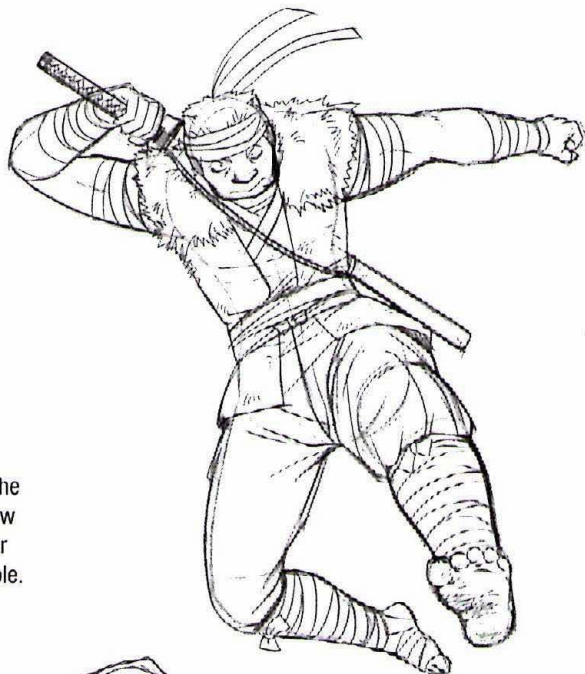
Take care to ensure that the arm is the same length when throwing *shuriken* as when extended.

The ninja raises his arm up to throw the *shuriken*, which he holds between his fingers. The shoulder is slightly higher before throwing the *shuriken* than after.

Here we see the *shuriken* thrown with the arm in a horizontal position. The torso is seen from the side. The shoulder scarcely changes position during the motion.

Movement Variations on Throwing *Shuriken*

Here we see a ninja throwing *shuriken* while jumping. Add speed lines following the *shuriken*'s direction of flight.

Here we see the ninja throwing a *shuriken* in a stock action character pose. In order to distinguish those parts that are near from those that are far, add hatched shading to the far leg.

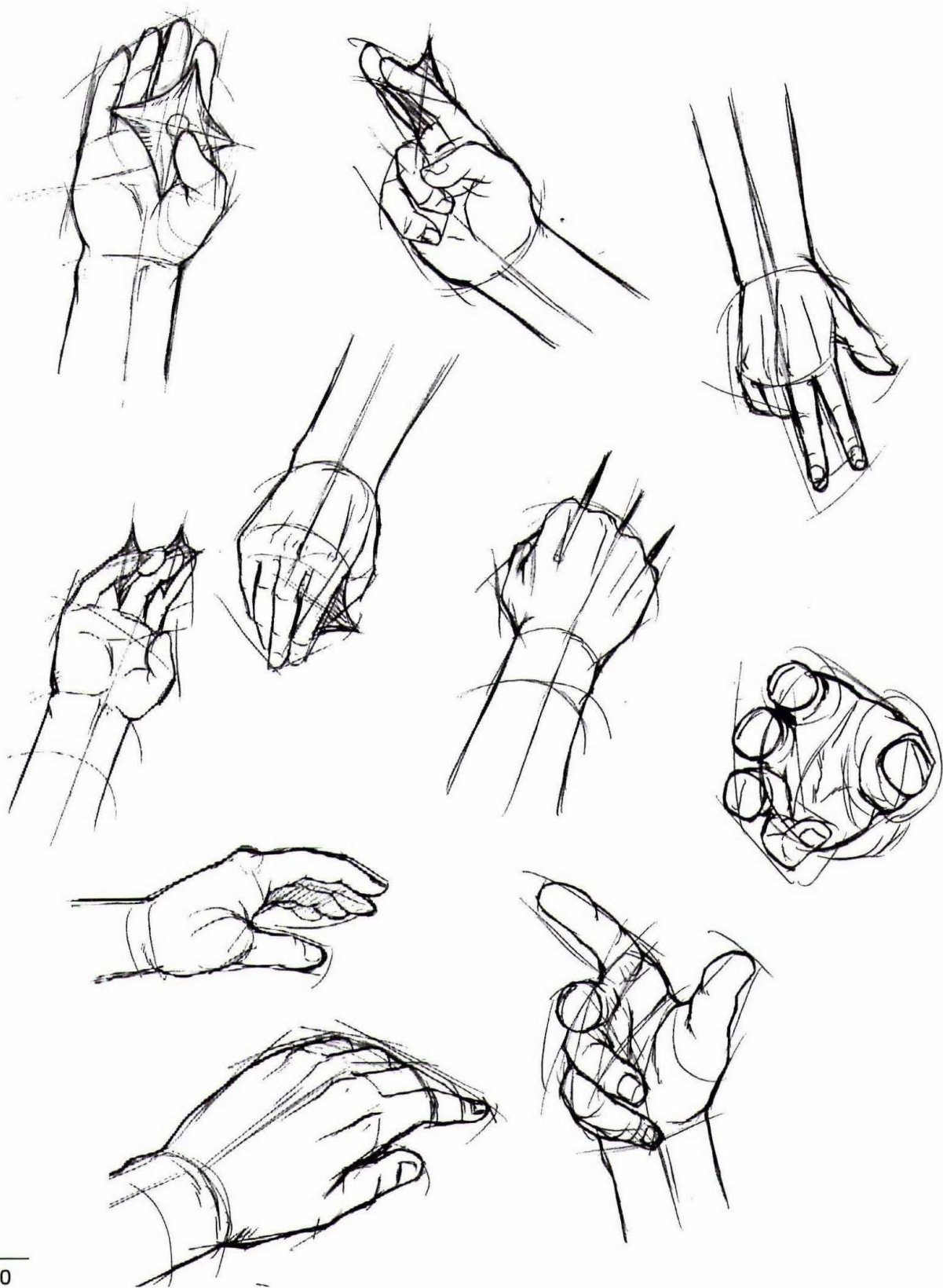
This figure shows a ninja throwing a *shuriken* while kneeling on one knee.

Using the *Shinobigatana*

Striking with the *Shinobigatana* (Short Straight Sword)
The arm is extended straight out. Add speed lines around the blade.

The ninja maintains poised for battle while shifting his/her stance. In this figure, the ninja uses the momentum of his/her body turning to the right to swing the sword.

Here, the ninja steps with his left foot, swinging the sword up. Draw lines underneath the sword's blade to indicate the sword's path when swung. Use tapered rather than even lines for the speed lines. This creates the feeling of dissipating into the air.

In this figure, the ninja unsheathes his sword as he jumps down. The composition is drawn from a low angle. Because the head and lower body are near the picture plane, the neck should be barely visible.

Add shading to underneath the knee of the far leg and render the front of the foot in flowing lines in addition to speed lines to create the illusion of a high velocity.

In this panel, the ninja swings the sword while jumping. The ninja attempting a surprise attack on his opponent by hiding himself in the bushes and jumping out. Show the upper body twisting in an attack posture.

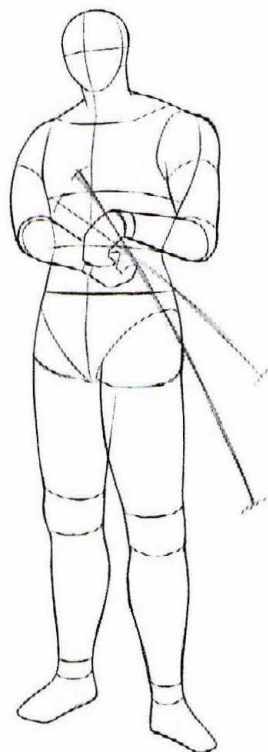
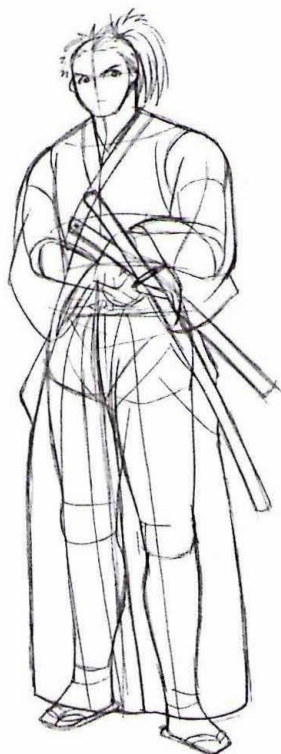
In this panel, the ninja makes a surprise attack from a high position. To prevent himself from being noticed, the ninja attacks hunched forward and with his legs tucked under. A low angle makes it easier to compose the action of jumping down from a high position. Since this is a worm's eye view, add shading to the underside of the feet.

Hand Holding a *Shuriken* and Hand after *Shuriken* Is Released

Chapter 3
Samurai Portrayal

Samurai I

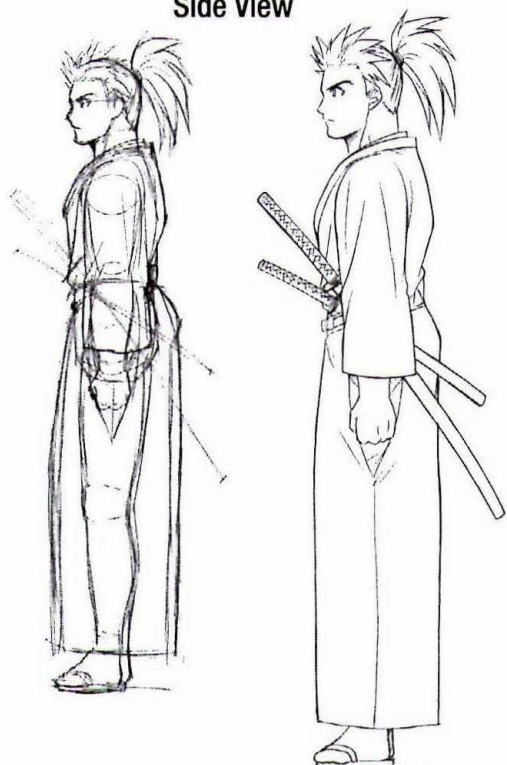
This type of samurai makes frequent appearances in historical dramas and *manga*. This character is not a high-ranking samurai.

Drawing Basic Poses: Samurai I

In this layout sketch, the figure is drawn at an angle to evoke a feeling of depth.

Giving the head a slight tilt creates a relaxed atmosphere.

Draw the sword so as to achieve visual balance between the hilt and the sheath. The left sleeve is draped over the sword, obscuring it from view, but draw it in at this stage anyway.

When drawing the *hakama* and kimono, evoke a sense of the cloth's texture by giving a natural slackness to the contours.

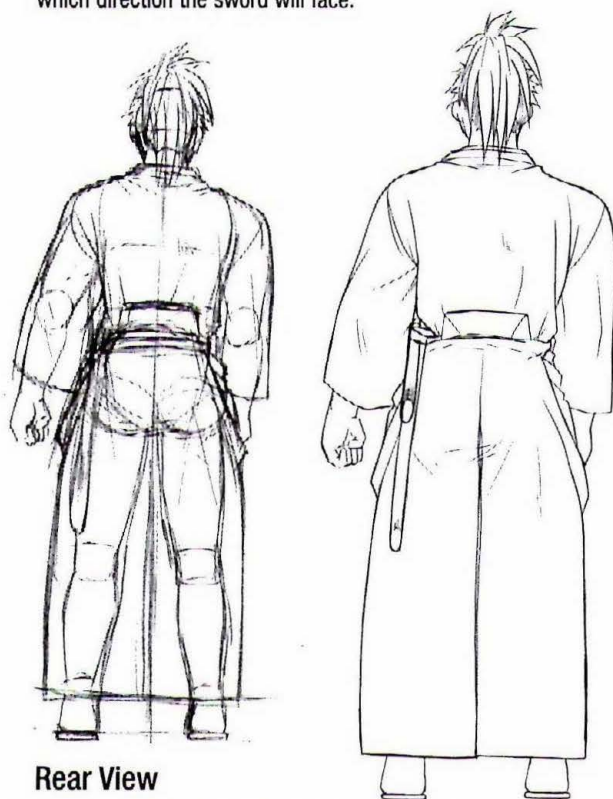
Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

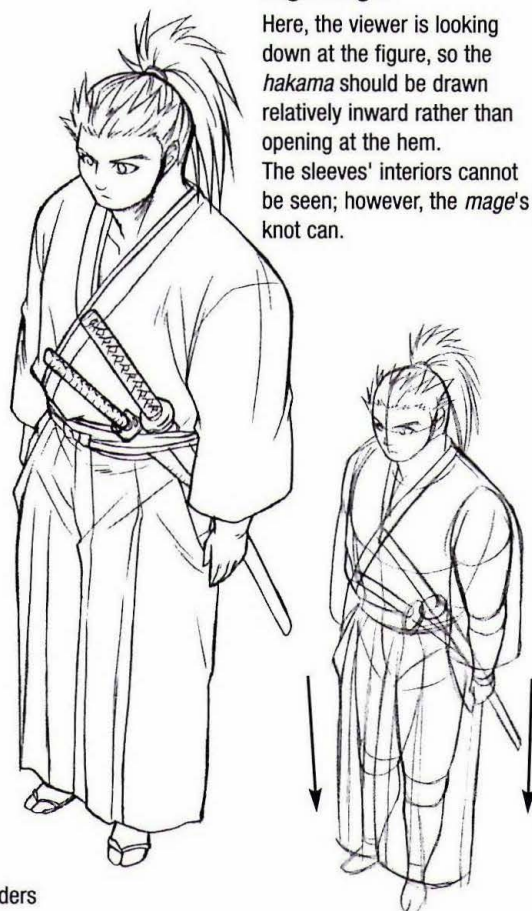
Side View

When the *hakama* is worn, the rear puffs outward. At the rough sketch stage, you should determine not only the positions of the elbows, the backside, the knees, and other key points on the figure, but also add lines to establish in which direction the sword will face.

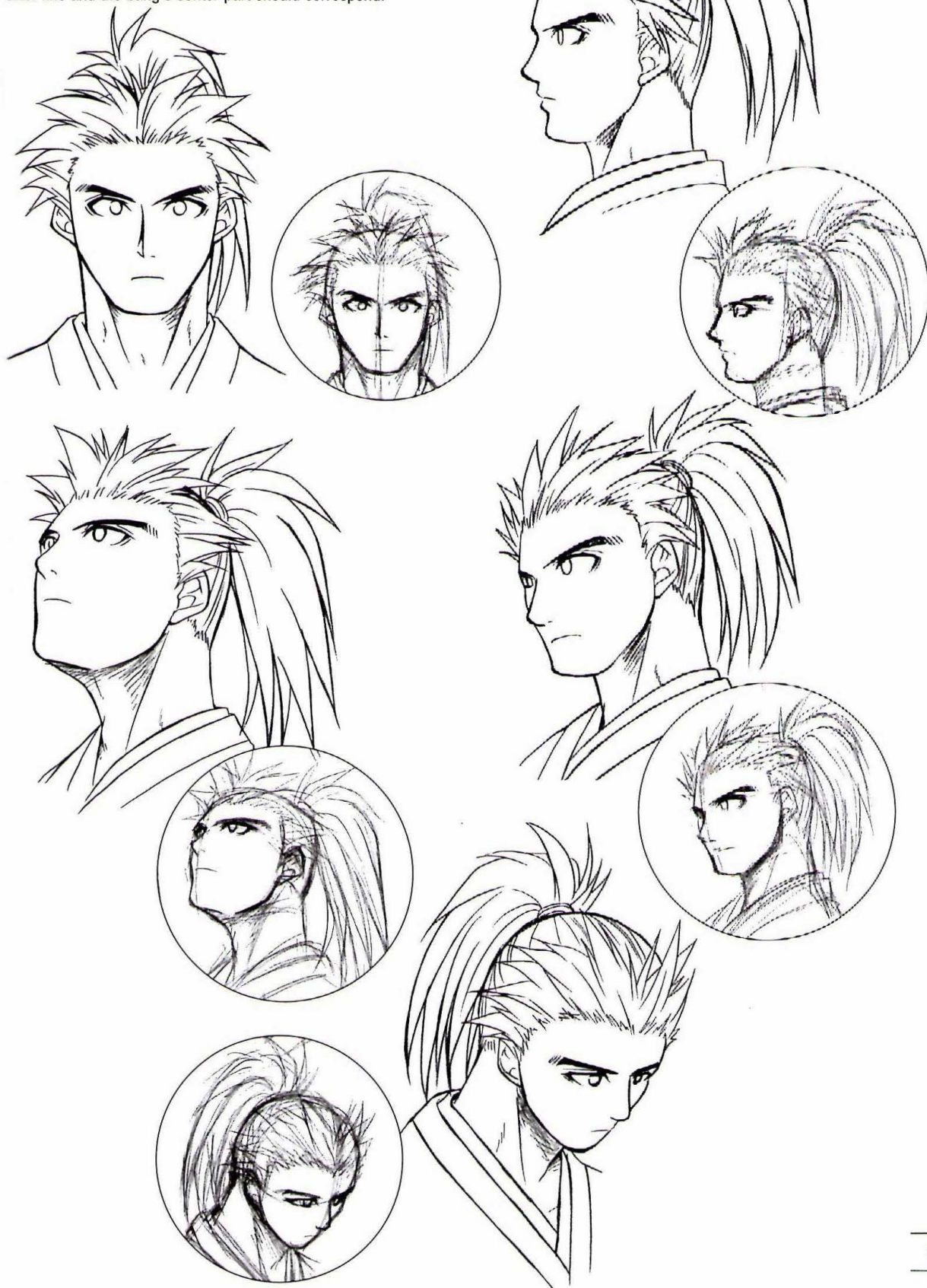
Low Angle

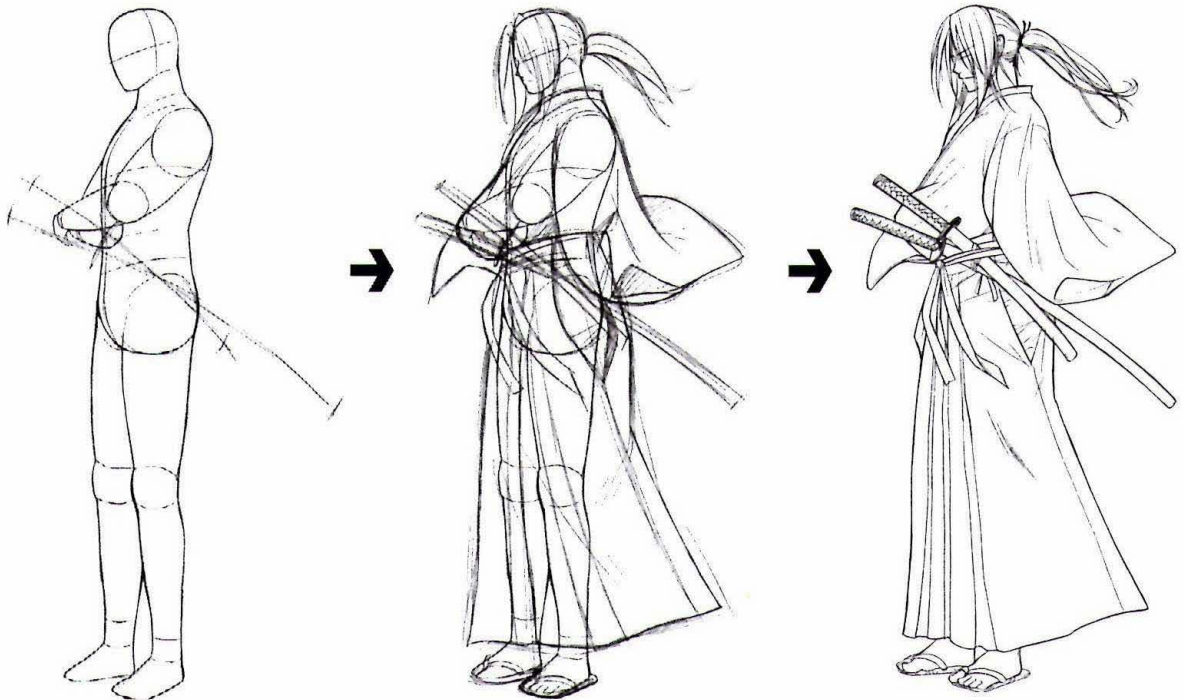
Since the viewer is looking up at the figure, give the *hakama* an expansive hemline. The kimono's sleeves' interiors should be visible as well. The *mage*'s knot is obscured from view.

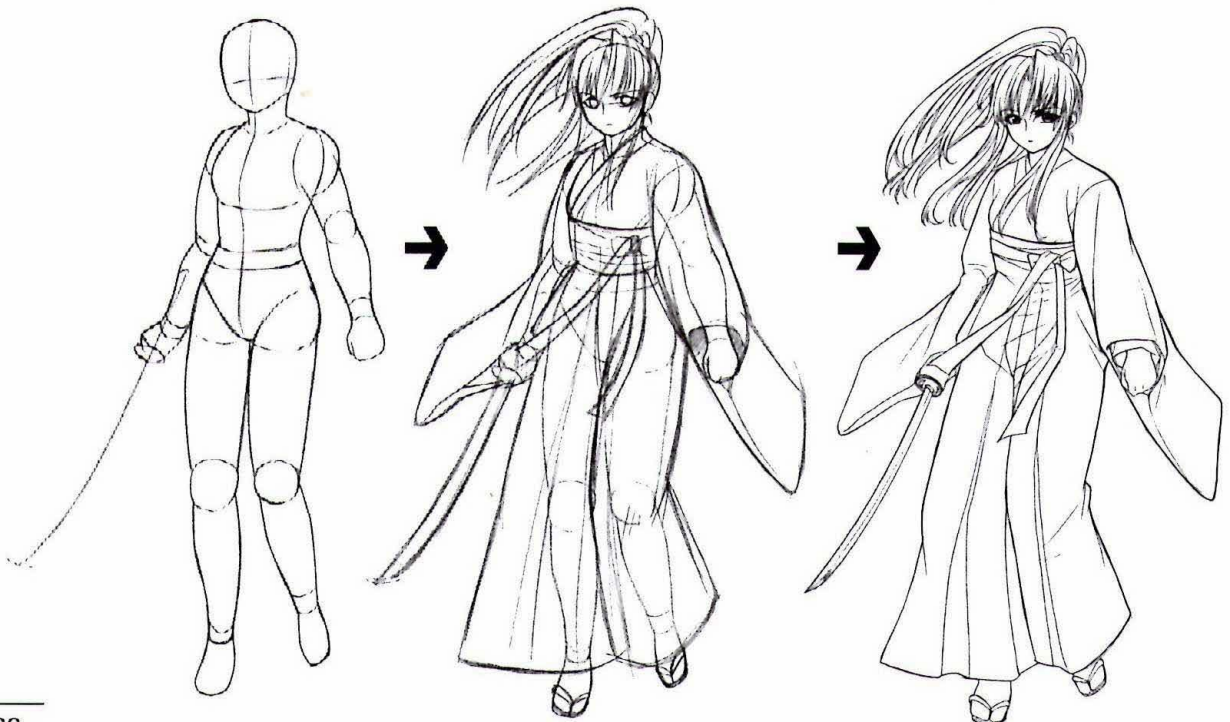
High Angle

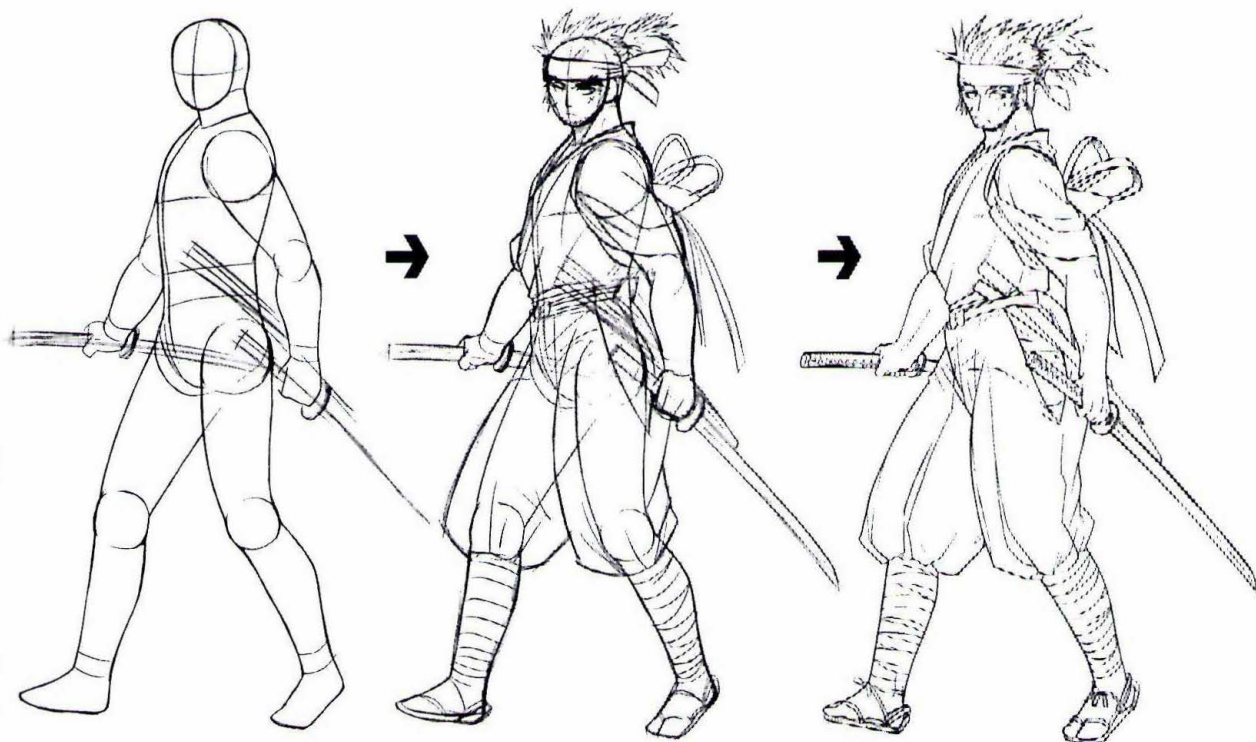
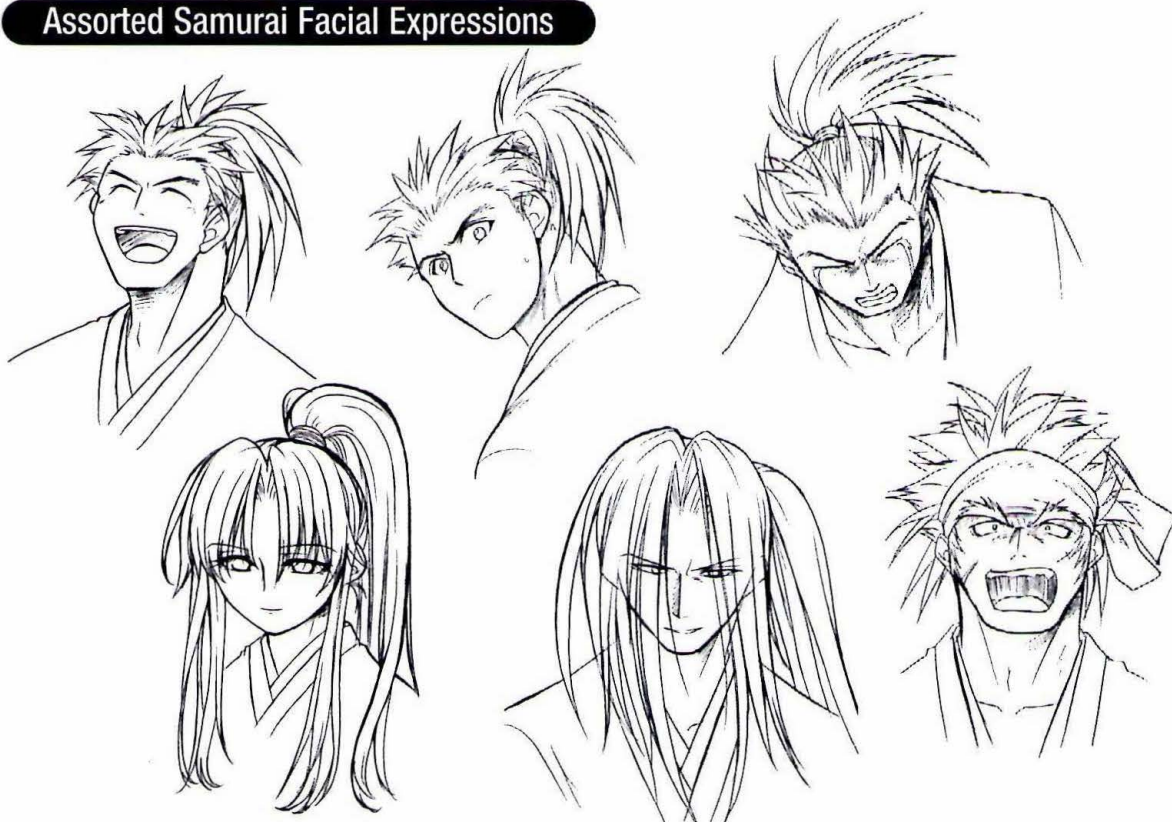
Here, the viewer is looking down at the figure, so the *hakama* should be drawn relatively inward rather than opening at the hem.
The sleeves' interiors cannot be seen; however, the *mage*'s knot can.

Rear View

When drawing a rear view, remember to sketch layouts for the shoulders and hips and to add shadows and small creases to the back.

Faces from Assorted Angles

The *mage*'s appearance changes depending on the angle. Typically, the front of the character's bangs are drawn parted in the center and combed to both sides. In addition, the head's axial line and the bang's center part should correspond.

I. Samurai Rendition A

Here we see a slim, handsome, young samurai. The hair is straight. Showing the kimono and hair flowing in a breeze gives the samurai a sensitive, attractive, youthful air. The samurai was intentionally given narrow bare feet, giving the feet a slenderer feel then would feet clad in *tabi* (socks).

II. Warrior Female Character

Minimize any sensuous appeal, instead giving her a courageous atmosphere. The *hakama* is a style worn by women. The *hakama* does not rest on the hips, but rather cinches at the waist. Drawing long sleeves denotes that this is a female character. Only female characters wear kimono with the long the sleeves.

III. Samurai Rendition B

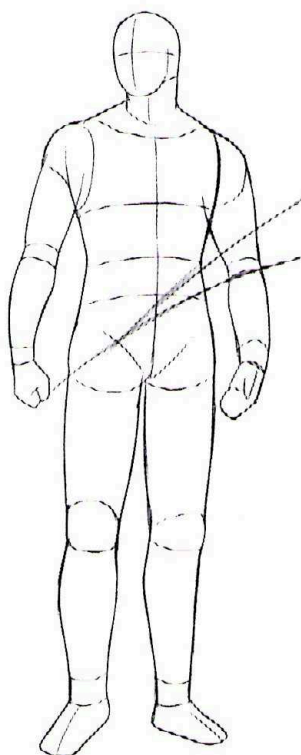
Here we see a samurai prepared for combat. The *hachimaki* (headband) makes the character seem imbued with fighting spirit. To allow for ease of movement, the *hakama* has been tied below the knees. Adding a scar to the face creates the feeling of a seasoned warrior. Drawing heavy eyebrows and sideburns makes this character look all-man.

Assorted Samurai Facial Expressions

Samurai II

This character has the earnest air samurai who places high value on *bushido*—the way of the samurai. His identifying feature is a *mage* (top knot) worn with the crown of the head shaved.

Drawing Basic Poses: Samurai II

1

Be aware that the *haori* will increase the samurai's girth when worn, and draw the arms slightly distanced from the torso.

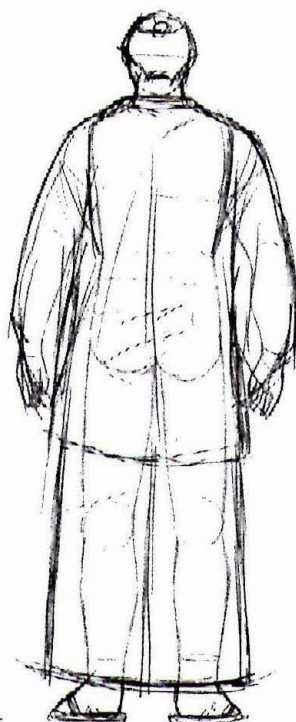
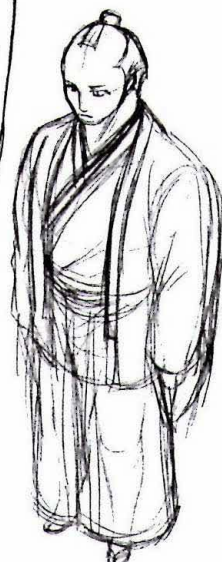
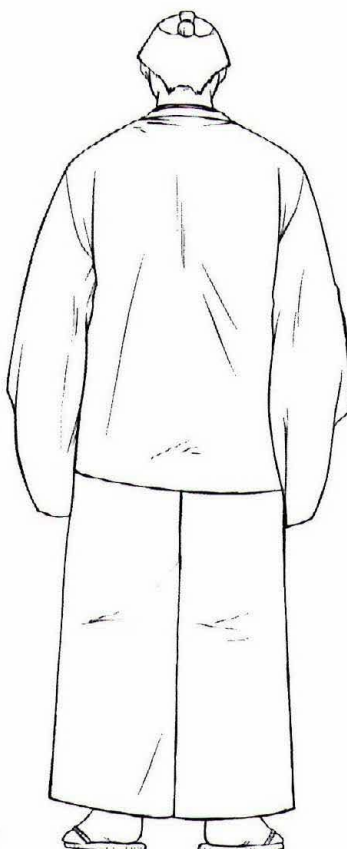
2

When you actually draw the sword at this angle, all parts other than the handle will be obscured from the viewer. However, you still should draw even those parts that will not be visible.
It helps identify how the sword comes in contact with the kimono.

3

Draw the *mage* on top of the head's axial line. The *hakama*'s *obi* (sash) knot should also lie along the axial line.

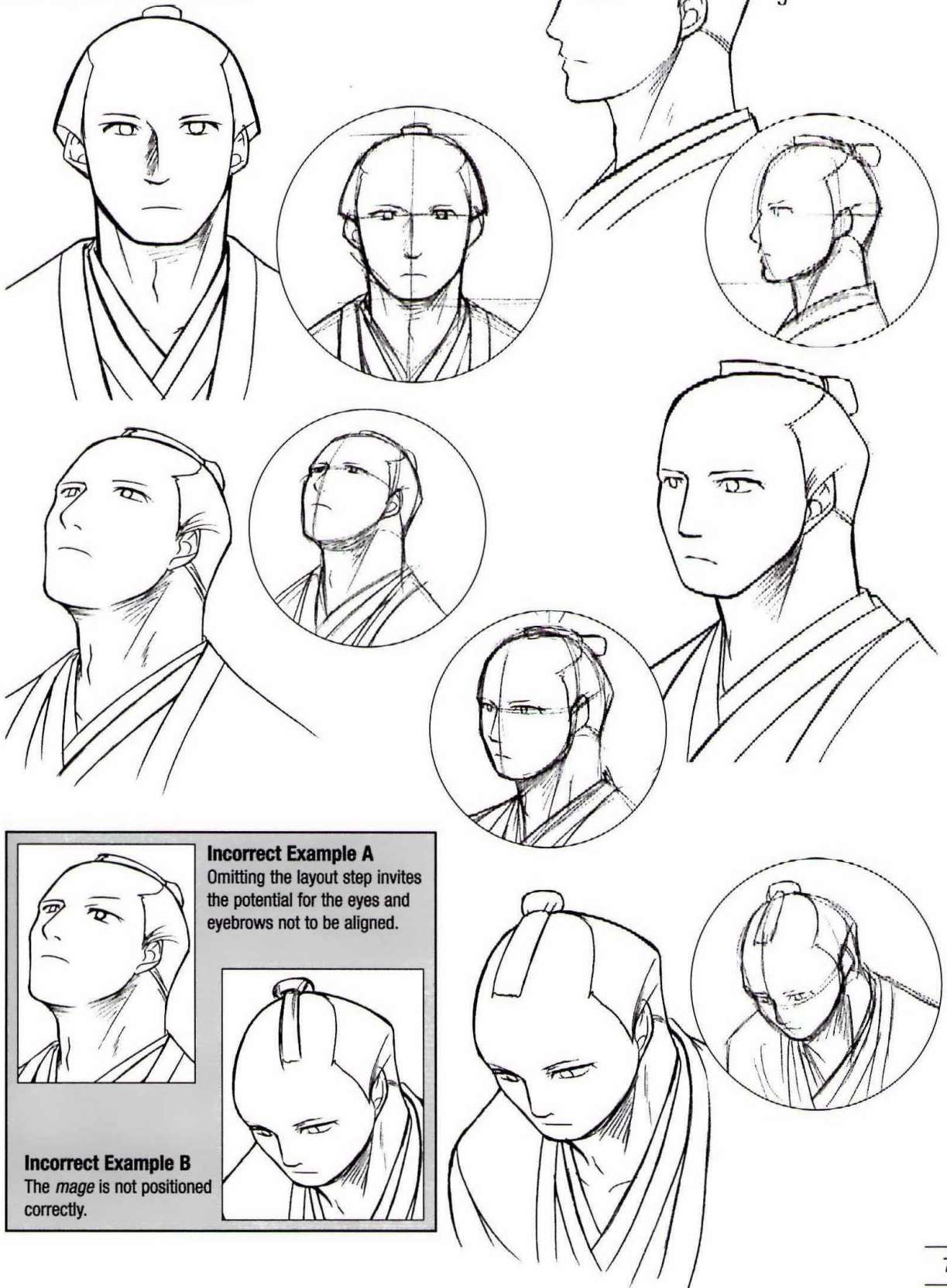
4

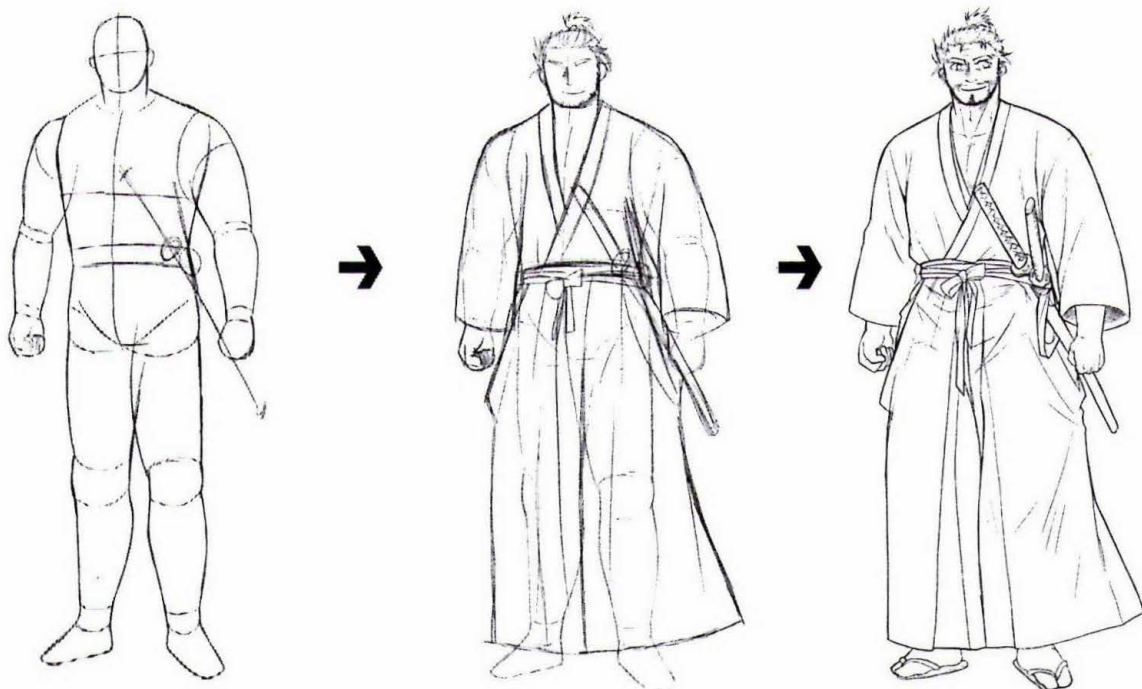
To draw the *hakama*'s pleats, rather than merely drawing vertical lines, treat each as an individual surface and indicate which portions of the hem are far and close to the picture plane.

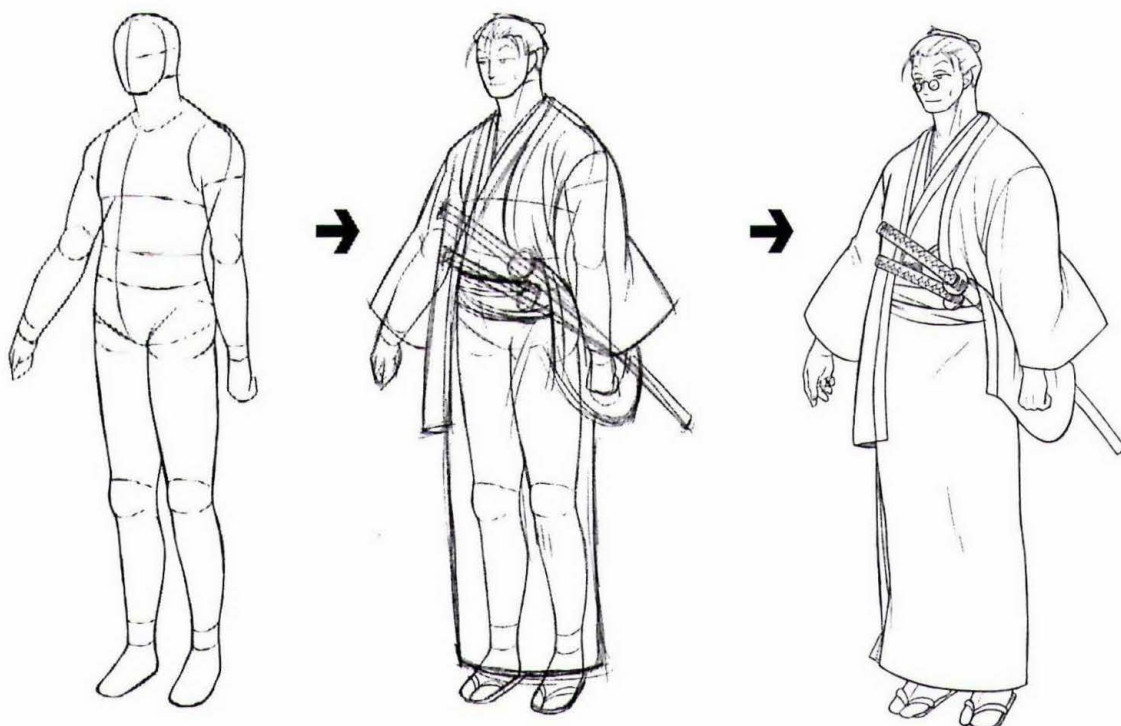
Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Faces from Assorted Angles

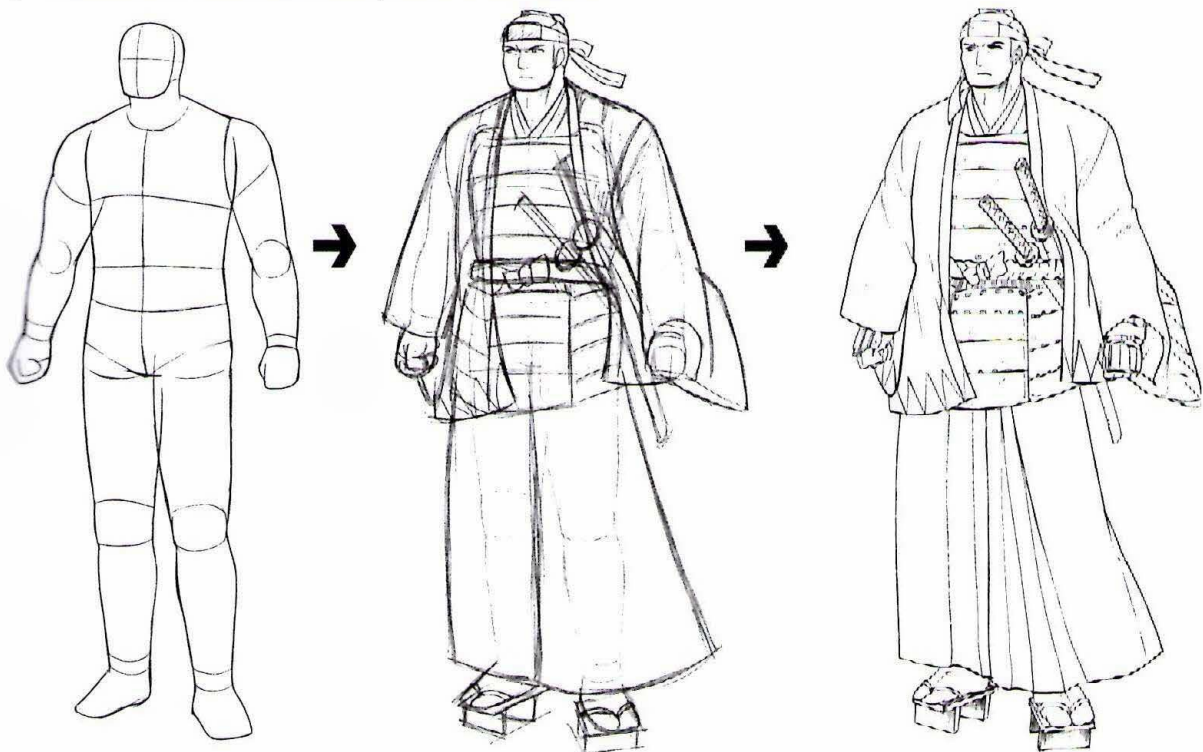
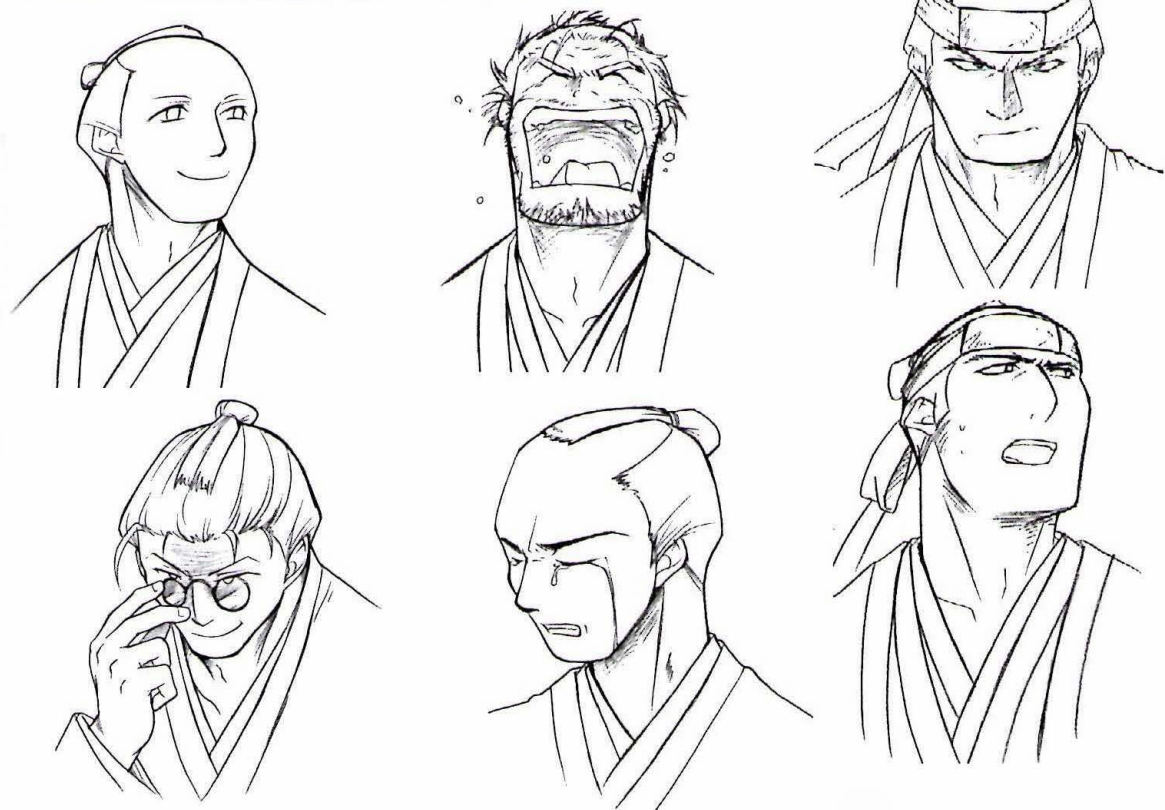
The *mage* is tied in two positions (see 1 and 2). Consequently, hair must be present at the base of where the hair is knotted. The shaved portion of the head rises from the rear at an oblique angle. Use curved contours (see 3).

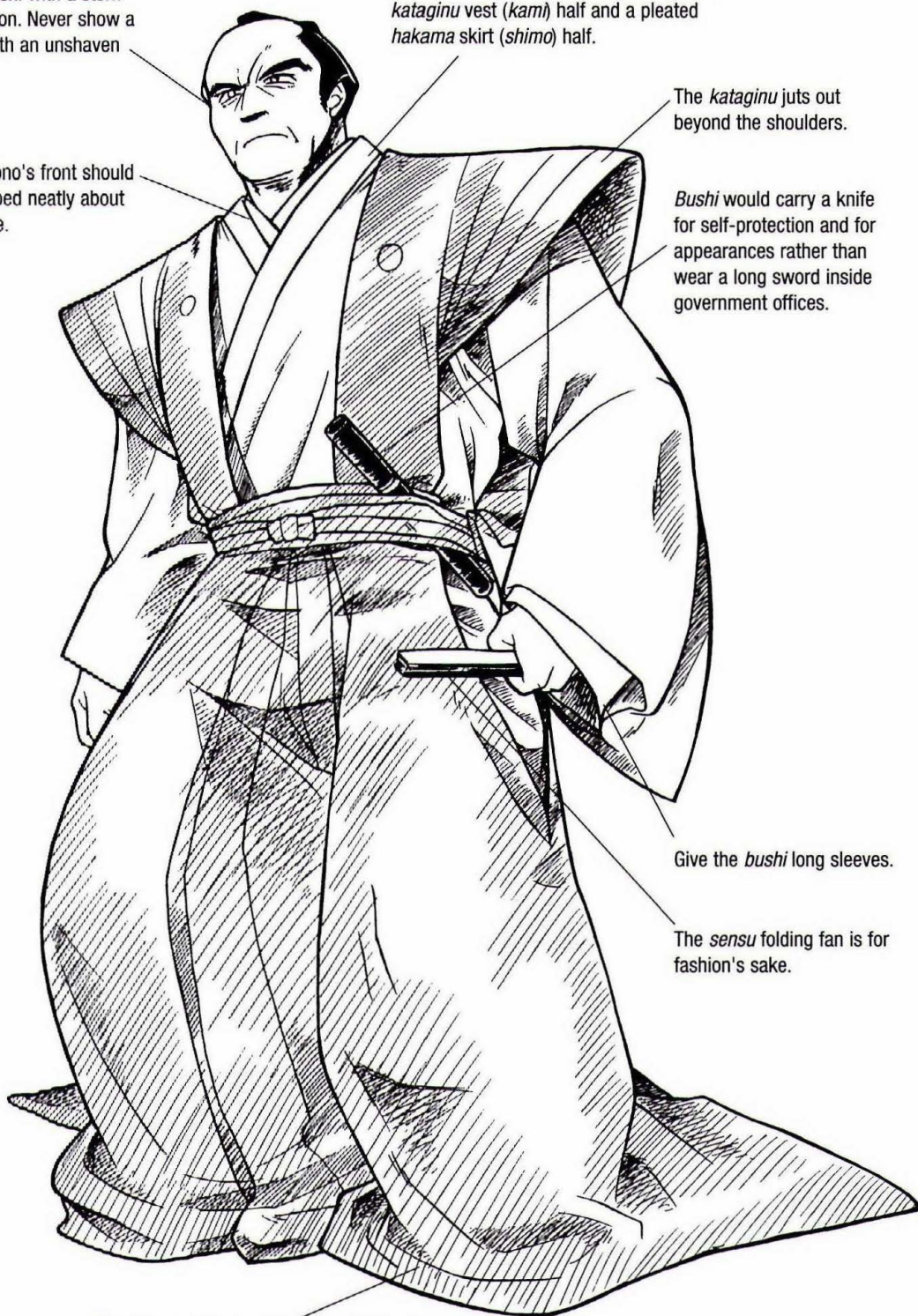
Incorrect Example A
Omitting the layout step invites the potential for the eyes and eyebrows not to be aligned.

Incorrect Example B
The *mage* is not positioned correctly.

I. Alternative Samurai Renditions

This samurai is entertaining in his incongruent traits. On the one hand, he is lazy and has a slightly flea-bitten look about him. However, he is also trustworthy and is capable of defeating the enemy. Draw him with scruffy hair and with the front of his kimono hanging loosely open.

II. Scholastic Samurai

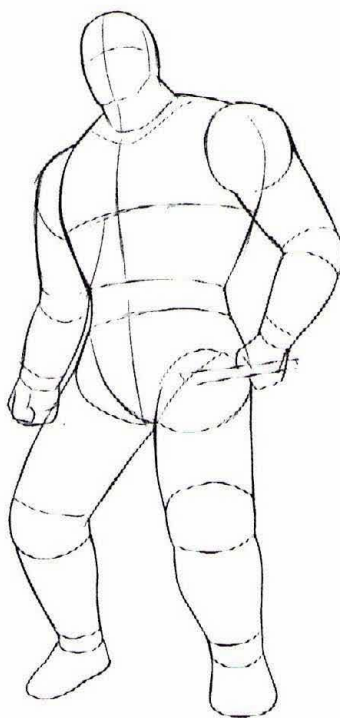
Here we see a brainy samurai. This type of character is frequently used for a samurai who also functions as a scholar, a doctor, or is a learned samurai. He does not wear a *hakama* but rather wears a *haori* over his kimono. During the Edo Period (1603-1867), eyeglasses had small, round lenses and rested on the nose. He is typically drawn with narrow eyes and eyebrows and wearing a subtle grin.

III. Samurai in Shinsengumi

The "Shinsengumi" were a group of samurai in Kyoto who served to uphold the peace. They are identified by the distinctive *haori*, under which they wore armor and gauntlets. An iron plate sits in forehead portion of the *hachimaki*. The *Shinsengumi* placed tremendous emphasis on *bushido* and comprised primarily young, highly skilled swordsmen. These youthful characters were serious and very strict with themselves.

Bushi

These were upper class samurai occupying bureaucratic positions. These samurai spent most of their time indoors and wore stately clothing. The key is to draw *bushi* with a masculine, austere air.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Bushi*

1

Give the *bushi* short legs and the figure a wide girth. Visualize a square when determining the shape of the upper body. Be conscious of the costume's width at the shoulders and feet when drawing.

2

Draw the chest puffed out, maintaining awareness of its girth. Ensure with this pose that the head's center is aligned with that of the body.

3

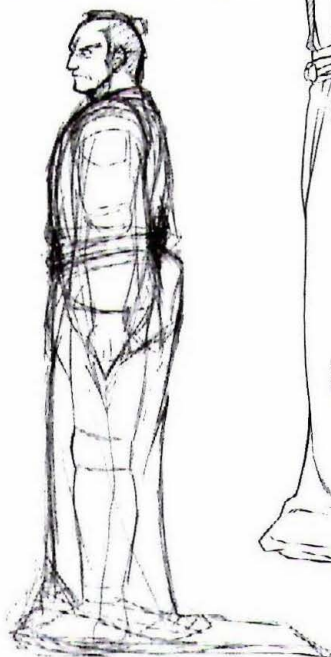
Draw the clothing over the manikin sketch. The *kataginu* (vest) is made of stiff fabric and sticks out sharply. The *hakama*'s hem completely covers the feet. Create a feeling of stability by adding horizontal creases underneath the feet.

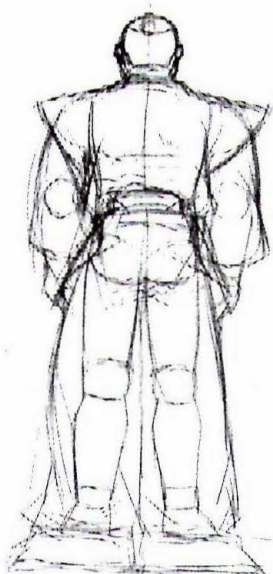
4

Show sagging fabric and add creases. Visualize the chest's contours when drawing the collar. Draw ripples to suggest excess fabric rolling back.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Side View

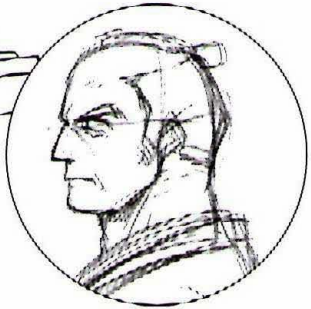
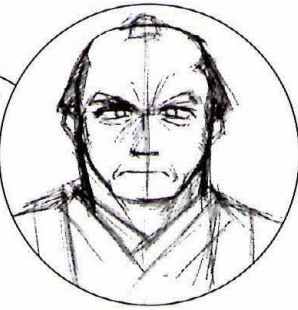
Draw the *hakama*'s sash higher in the back than in the front. The fabric bulges slightly at the backside. In profile, a gap is visible from between the *kataginu* and the kimono. Use shading to portray this gap.

Low Angle

The *bushi*'s *mage* (top knot) is barely visible. The head appears smaller than the lower body owing to the angle, but the breadth of the *hakama* makes the head look even tinier.

Rear View

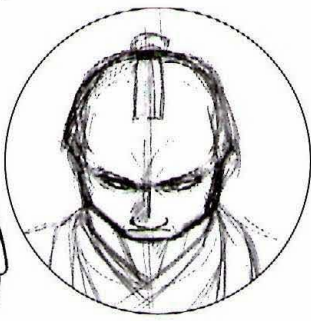
The *hakama*'s hem drags at the *bushi*'s front. Give the *hakama* an expansive hemline. Unlike the *kataginu* shoulders, the sides appear natural when shown drooping rather than stiff.

High Angle

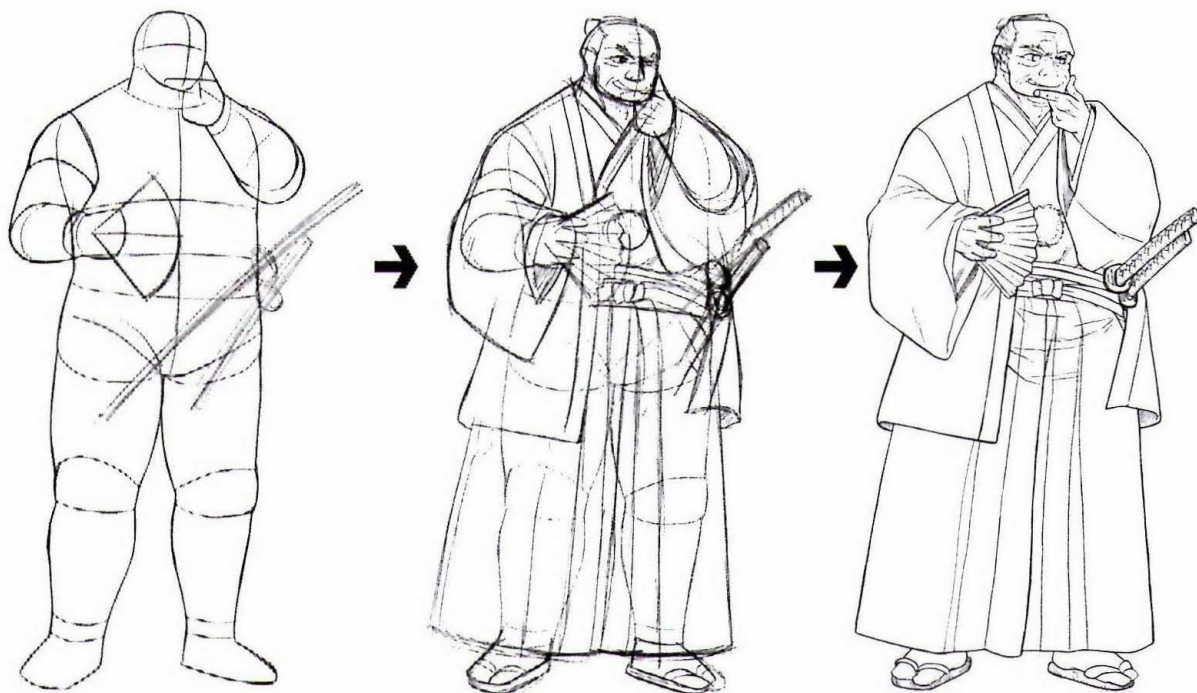
The feet look tinier than the head. Take care that the *hakama*'s hem does not take on an excessively narrow appearance.

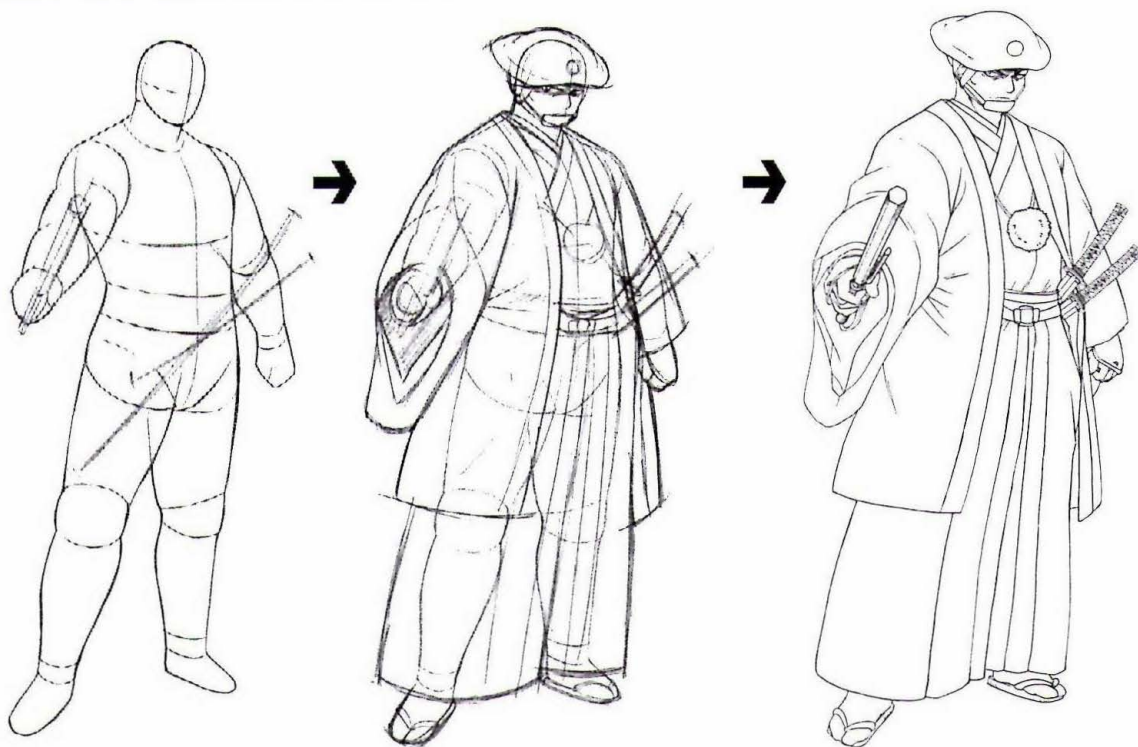
Faces from Assorted Angles

When drawing from a profile or 3/4 view, show the hair protruding slightly from the rear of the head. If the hair protrudes too much from the head, the character will look like he has a town merchant's hairstyle.

Incorrect Example A
The hair at the rear of the head has too much volume and looks bad.

Incorrect Example B
The facial features are shifted off center.

Draw a V from between the eyes, running back over the forehead and make the ends of the eyebrows bushy to make the character appear aged.

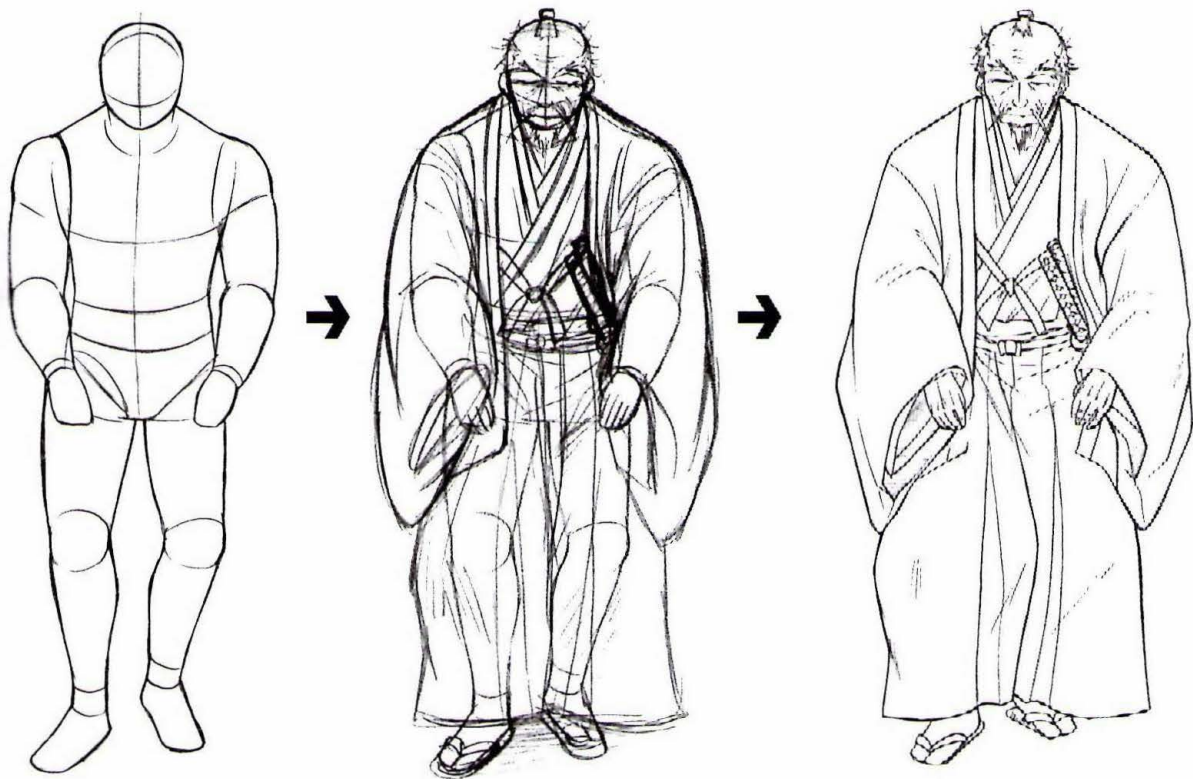
I. Villain *Bushi*

The distinguishing features of the villainous *bushi* are his chunky body, gray hair, deep wrinkles in the face, and wicked sneer. The *sensu* (folding fan) is an identifying prop for this character type. The hands and fingers should be thick like the body and carved with deep wrinkles. The fingers should be dumpy.

II. Law Enforcement *Bushi*

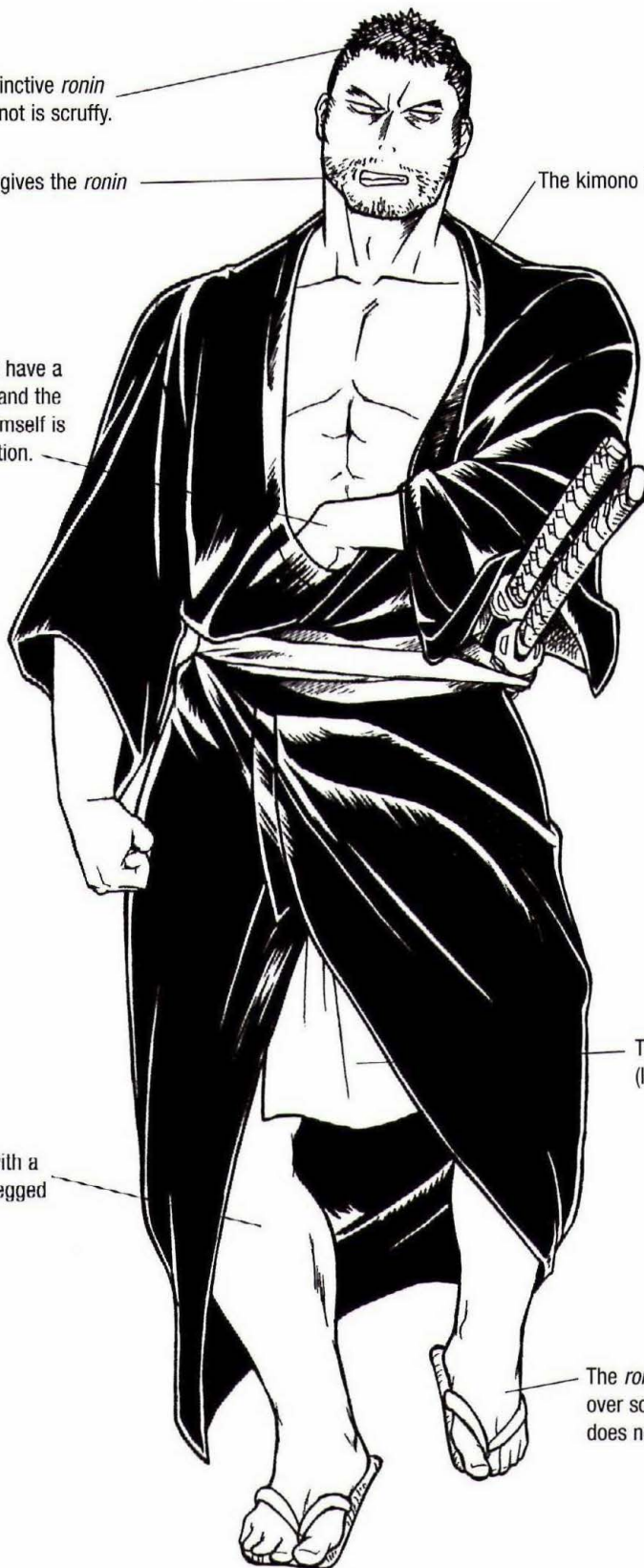
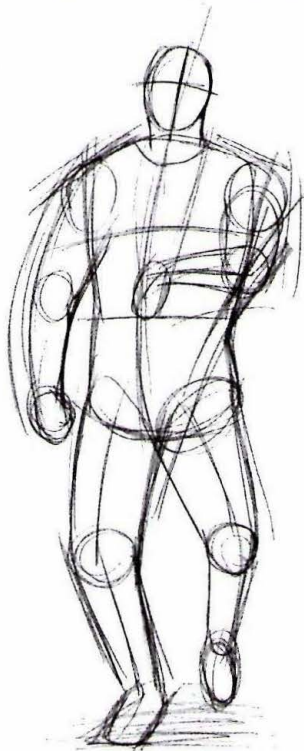
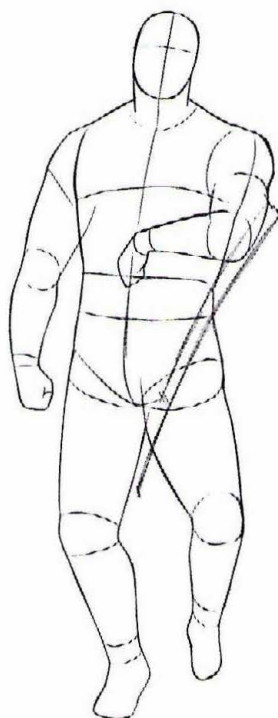
This character is absolutely intolerant of wrongdoing. Give him a piercing gaze. He carries the *jitte* (truncheon), the particular weapon used by the police during the era.

III. Elderly *Bushi*

This sort of character might appear as counsel to a senior officer. Give this character long eyebrows and a long beard. Round his back, bend his knees to lower his hips, and show him with a bowlegged gate to make him look like a convincing old man.

→

→

Assorted *Bushi* Facial Expressions

Ronin

A *ronin* is a samurai without steady employment and born of humble lineage. Often appearing as villains, *ronin* live hand to mouth, are familiar with all of the town's secrets, and are physically strong. *Ronin* are typically drawn with physically fit builds that can be intimidating at first glance and dressed slovenly.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Ronin*

The *ronin* has an ambling, bowlegged gait. The hand held at his belly is positioned above the *koshiobi* (sash cinched at the hips).

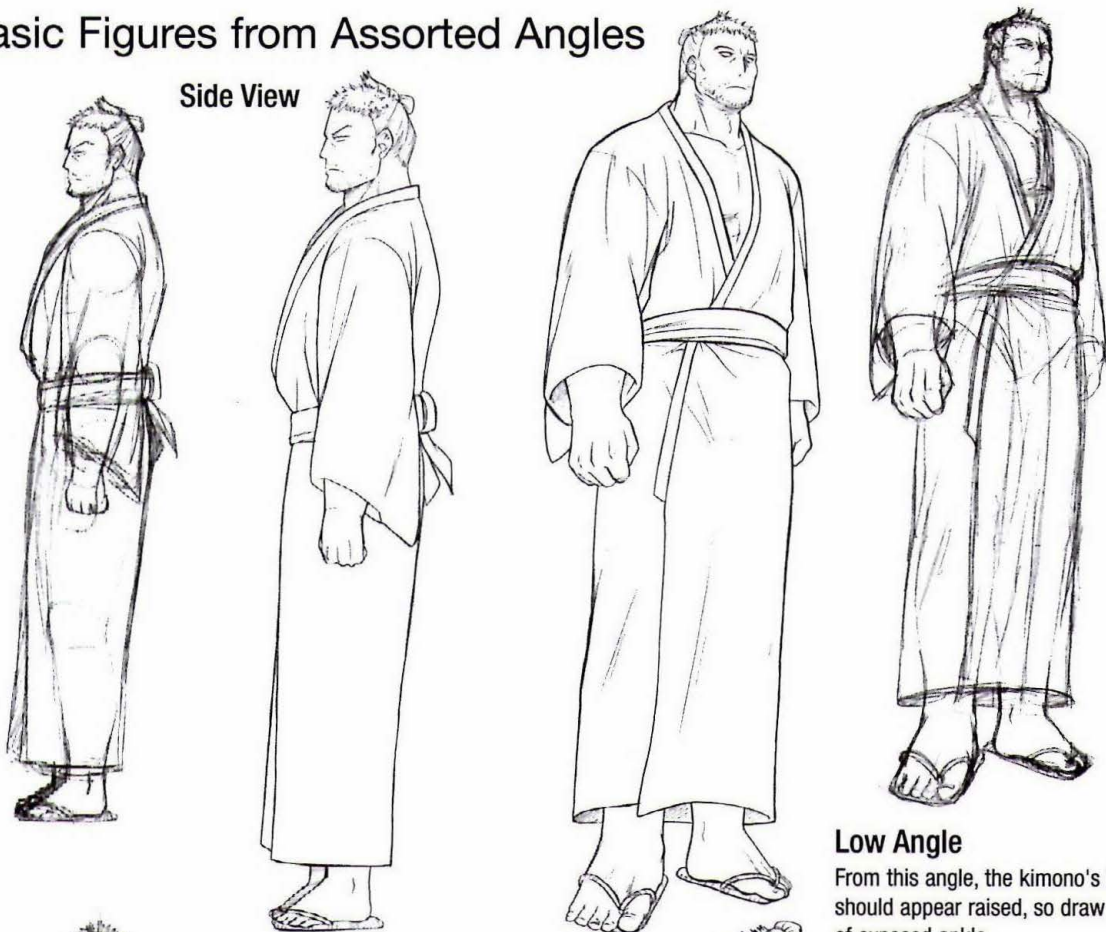
Drawing the right hand balled into a fist makes the *ronin* appear to be swaggering as he walks.

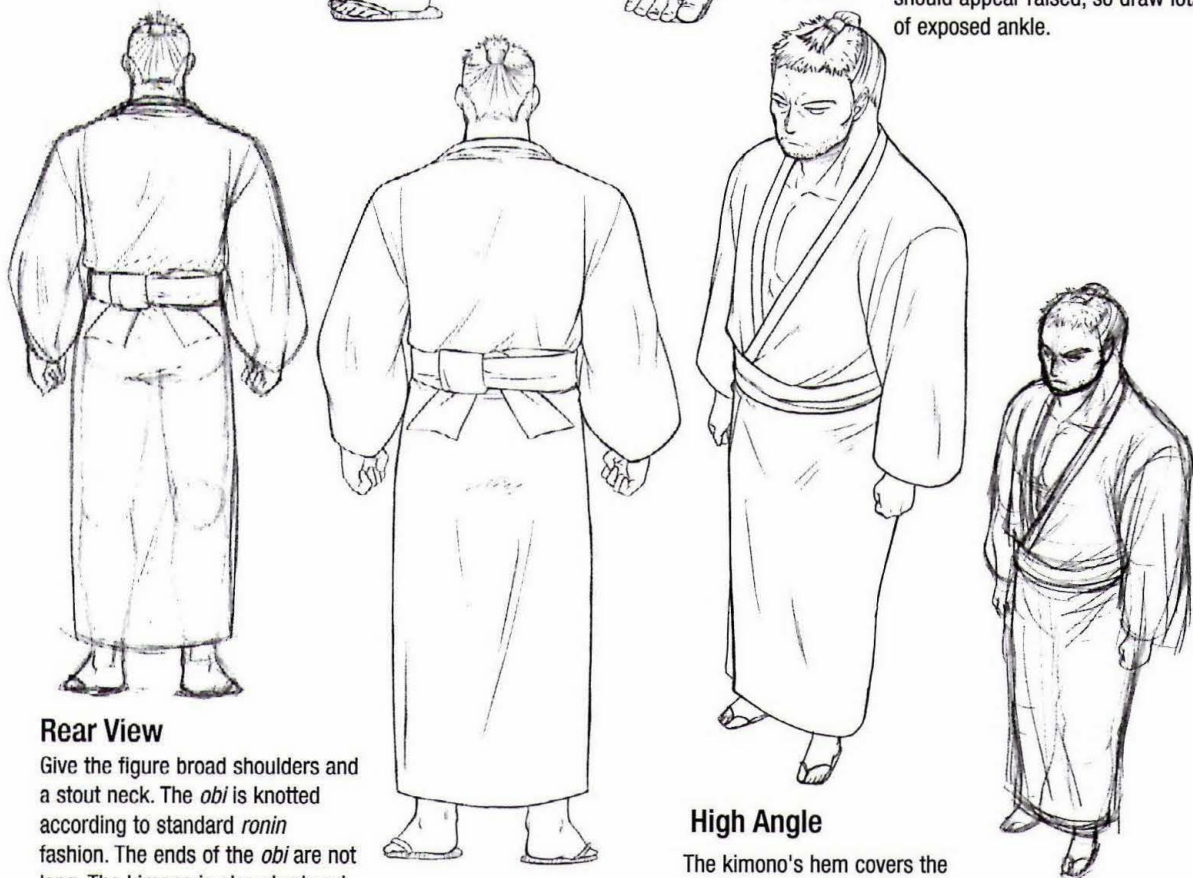
Show the sleeves rolled up and draw the kimono hem to correspond to the *ronin*'s bowlegged stride. The hem at the side of the raised leg should be shorter than the other side.

4

The spread legs pull at the kimono's fabric at the knees. Add creases to the kimono's lower half maintaining awareness of where the knees are positioned.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Side View

Low Angle

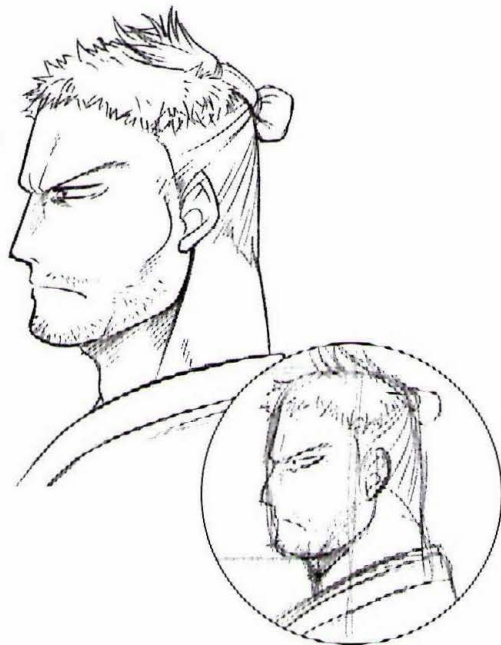
From this angle, the kimono's hem should appear raised, so draw lots of exposed ankle.

Rear View

Give the figure broad shoulders and a stout neck. The *obi* is knotted according to standard *ronin* fashion. The ends of the *obi* are not long. The kimono is also short and ends above the ankles.

High Angle

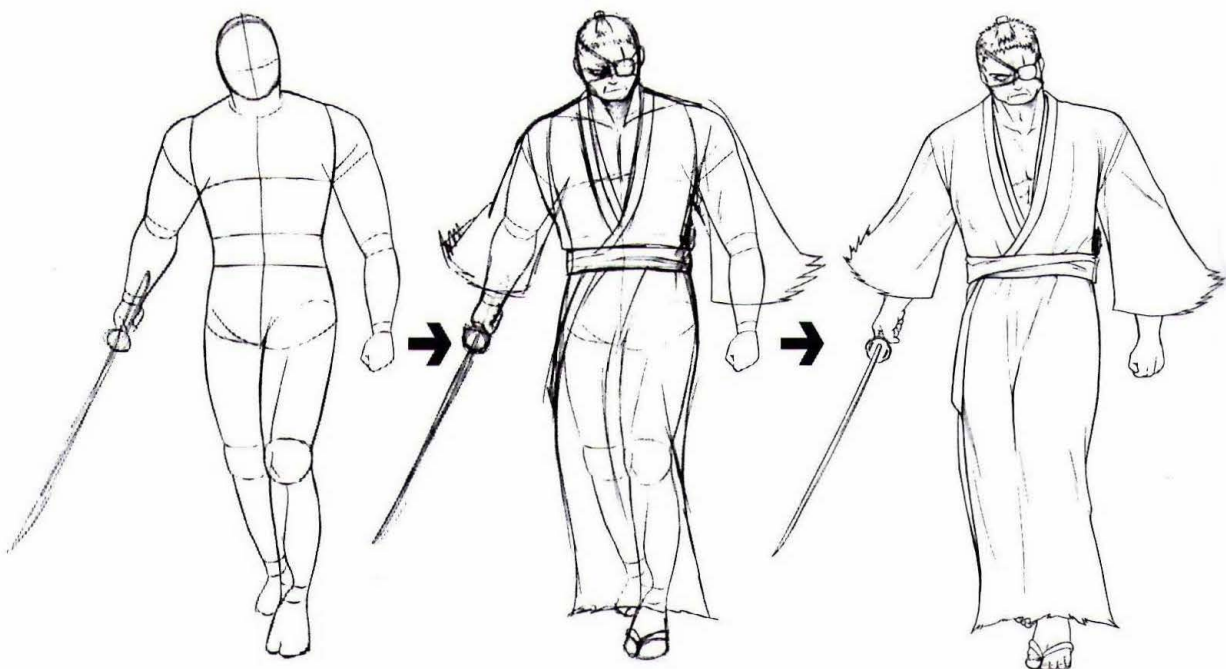
The kimono's hem covers the legs, and the ankles are no longer visible.

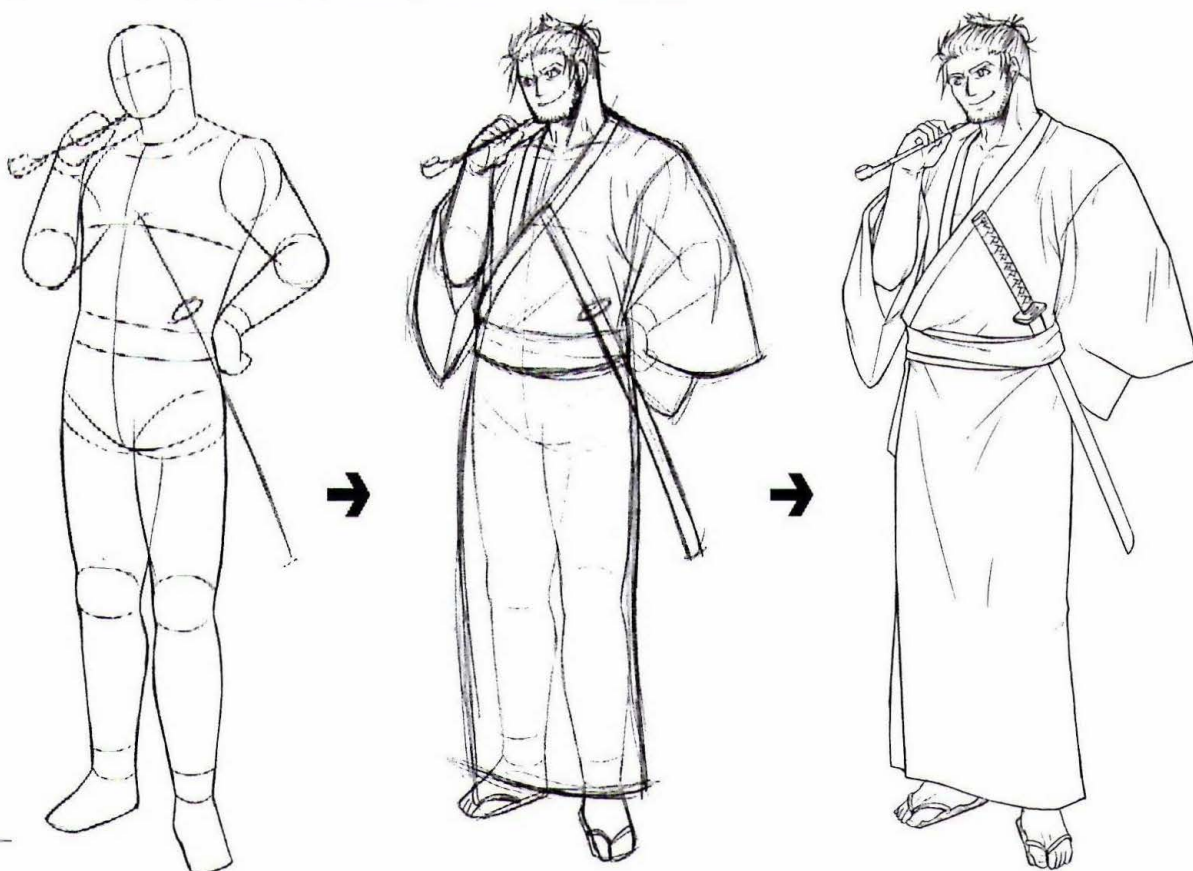
Faces from Assorted Angles

Give the *ronin* narrow eyes that are shallow-set and without an eyelid fold. Drawing the irises and pupils on the small side creates an evil countenance. Rendering the hair with fine, jagged locks, sweeping away from the face makes the *ronin*'s hair look slovenly. Emphasize rounded forms when drawing the face's contours.

Incorrect Example A
Take care to ensure that the forehead is visible underneath the bang's hairline. If the forehead is drawn too narrow, then the character will not look like a *ronin*.

Incorrect Example B
The character was drawn with a neck that is too thin given the figure's well-cut build.

I. Villainous *Ronin*

Here we see an insane villain. The whites of the eye and eye patch generate a creepy atmosphere. The kimono's sleeves and hem are jagged, creating a tattered look.

II. Non-Villainous *Ronin*

The moderately downward sloping black eyes project an air of kindliness. This is a *ronin* adored by children and animals. The *ronin* neatly wears his kimono, giving him a clean and tidy look.

Assorted *Ronin* Facial Expressions

The *ronin* wears a smirk, creating a rascally expression.

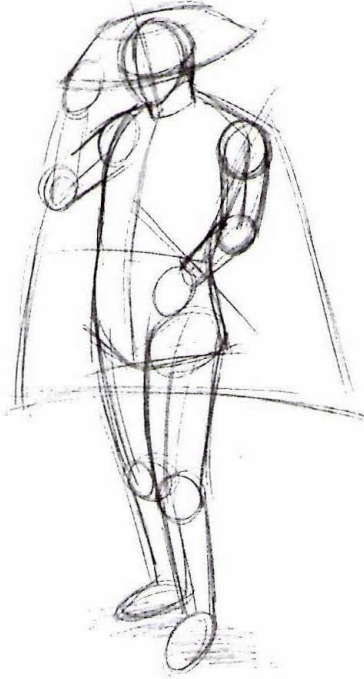
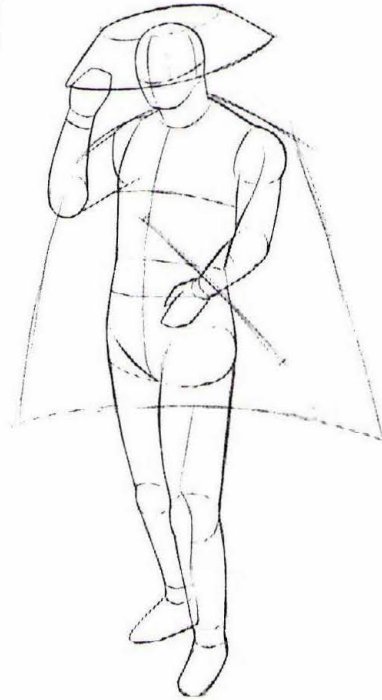
Adding shadows to the face and showing the face twisted into a sneer gives the appearance of an evil smirk.

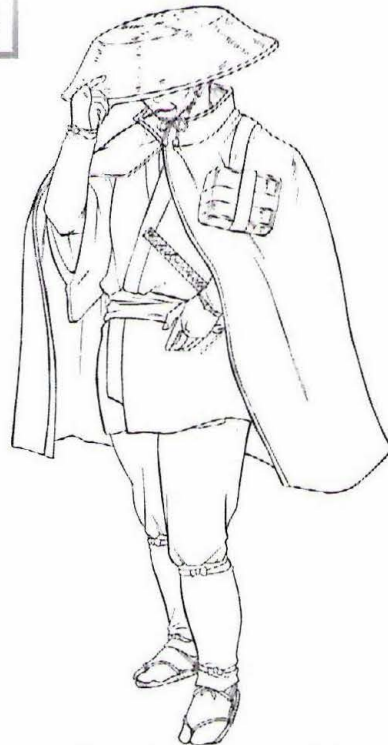
This *ronin* is seething with rage, portrayed using vertical lines.

Here we see a *ronin* glaring furiously.

Toseinin (Gambler)

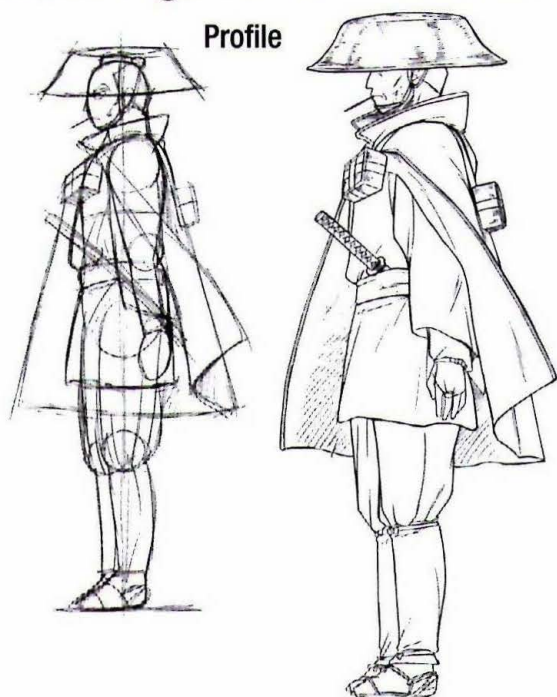
Toseinin were not samurai but rather often comprised men fleeing towns after having committed some form of crime. *Toseinin* have no permanent home and instead roam all across Japan. In stories, *toseinin* are enigmatic characters, occasionally playing heroic types, defending the meek instead of villains.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Toseinin* (Gambler)

The *toseinin* reaches for his hat with one hand to cover his eyes. He wears a cape, making his upper body appear larger. Consequently, drawing the legs closer together gives the figure visual balance. Make the lower body shorter than the upper body.

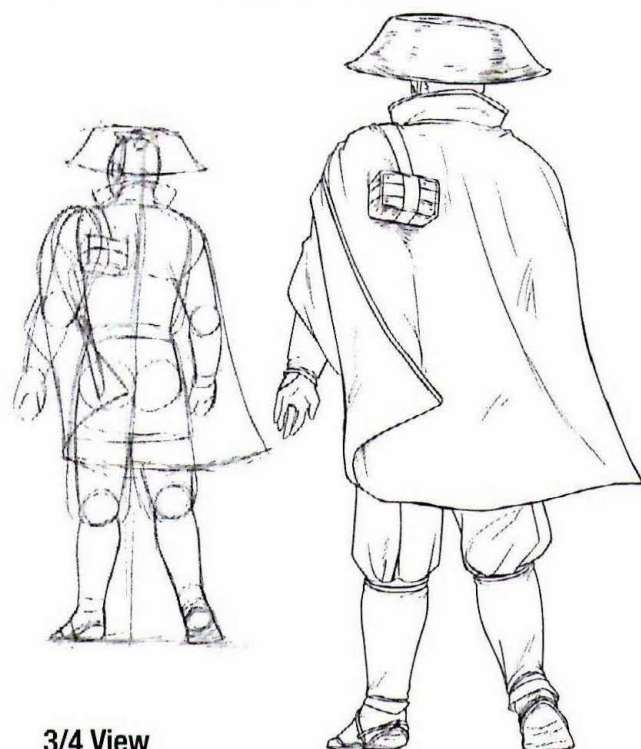
In addition to the character's build, the cape and straw hat also constitute key points. Sketch their layouts, while trying to maintain visual balance. Draw the hat's center to align with the head's center.

Sketch the hat's layout so that the tip of the hat spreads from the center in a radiating pattern. Establish roughly the forms and positions of the basket hung from the shoulder and the cape's standing collar.

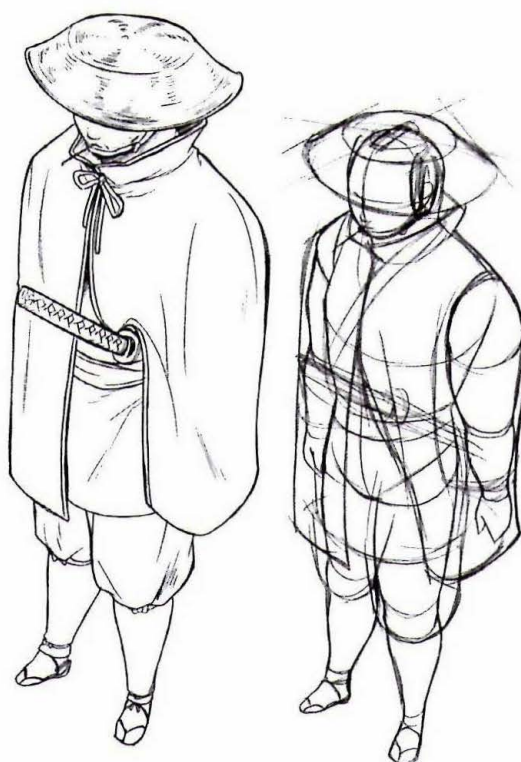
Use short, horizontal strokes to render the hat's weave. Imagine the hat's curved surface when drawing to obtain a sense of volume. Draw in a similar manner the weave of the basket hung from the shoulders.

Basic Figures from Assorted Angles

Profile

The hat has attached to its inside a cushion to prevent it from slipping. Because of this cushion, the hat does not actually rest directly on the head, adding extra height. Remember to include the basket hanging from the shoulder to the rear when drawing the figure in profile.

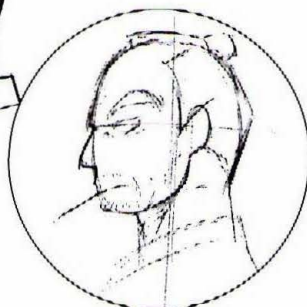
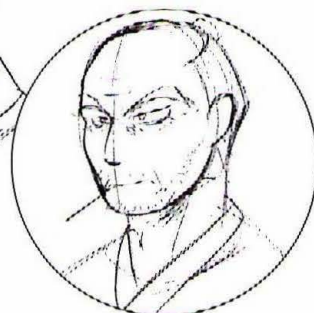
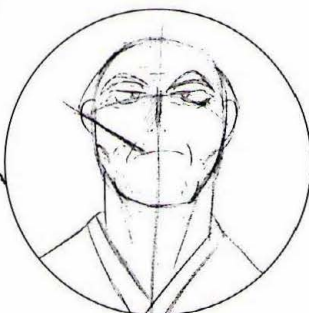
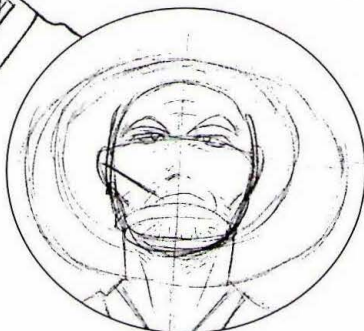
Low Angle

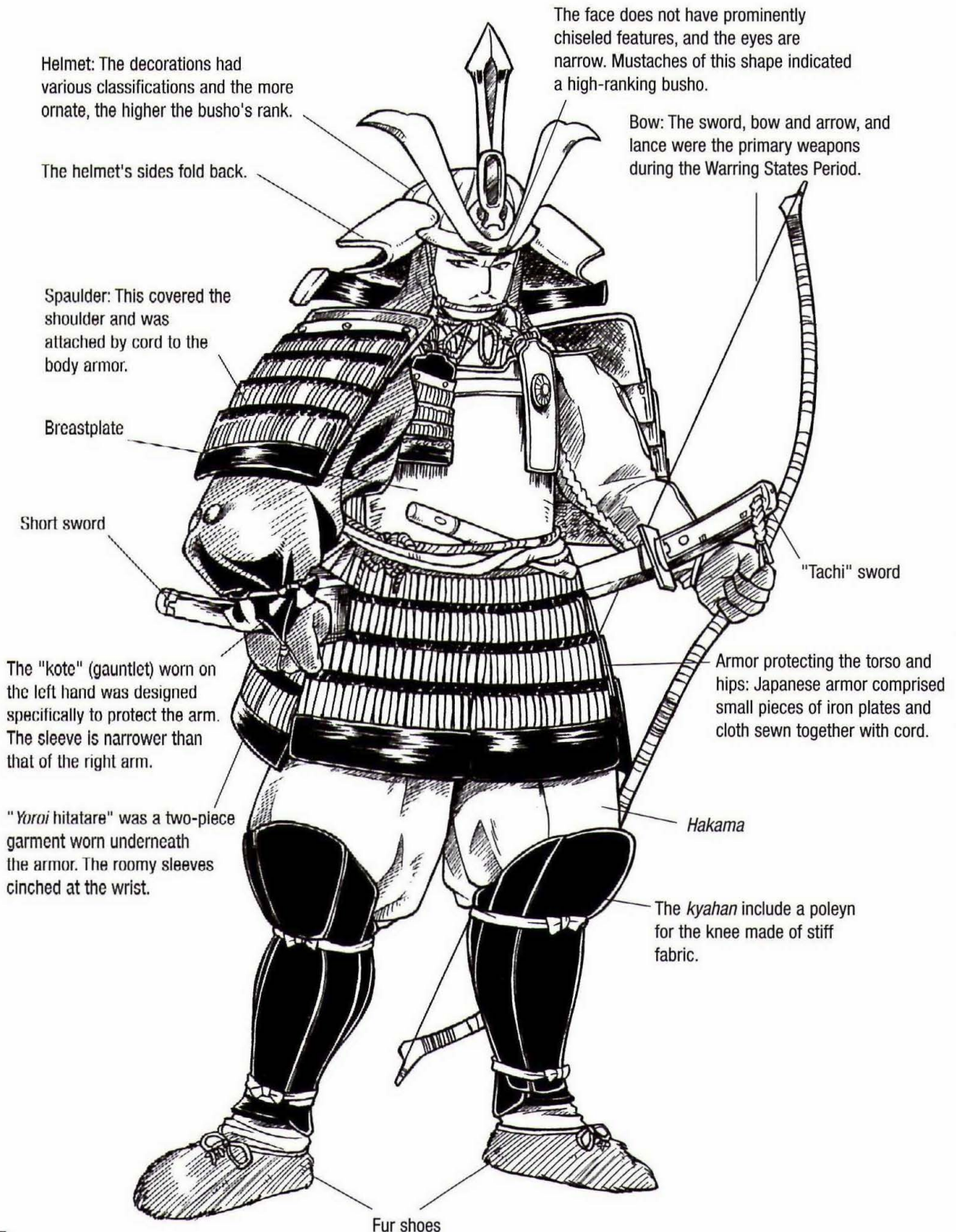
Establish and draw the cape's hemline as if looking up. The inside of the hat should be visible.

3/4 View

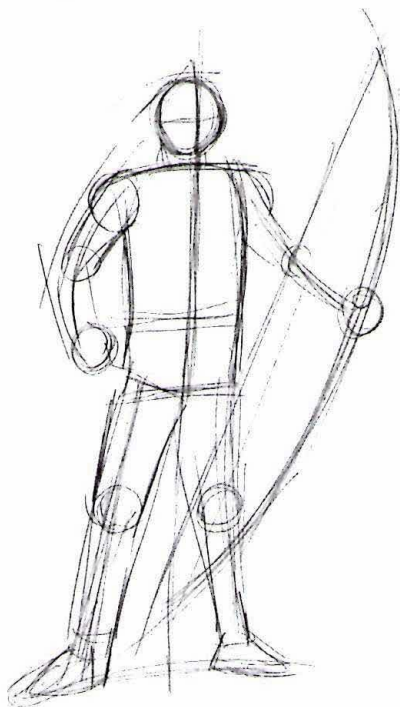
Adding shadow and creases to where the basket touches the cape imbues the basket with a sense of weight and it hanging securely from the shoulder. Omitting both shading and creases makes the basket appear light.

High Angle

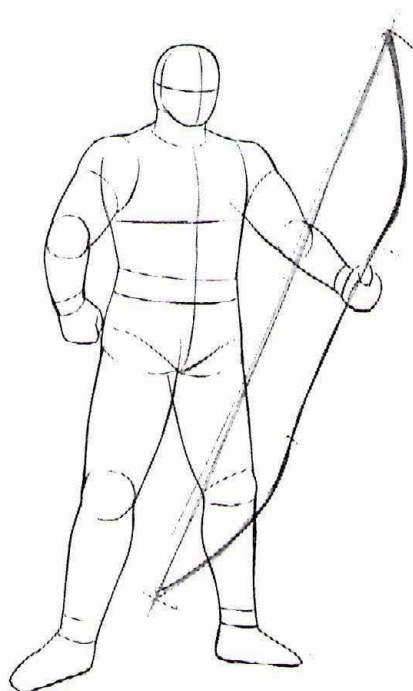
In contrary to the low angle, from an overhead view, the hat's top is visible, but the spread of the cape is not.

Faces from Assorted Angles

The *toseinin*'s indigent journeys mean that he gets an insufficient amount of food. Add shadows to the cheeks to create an emaciated look.

Oyoroi

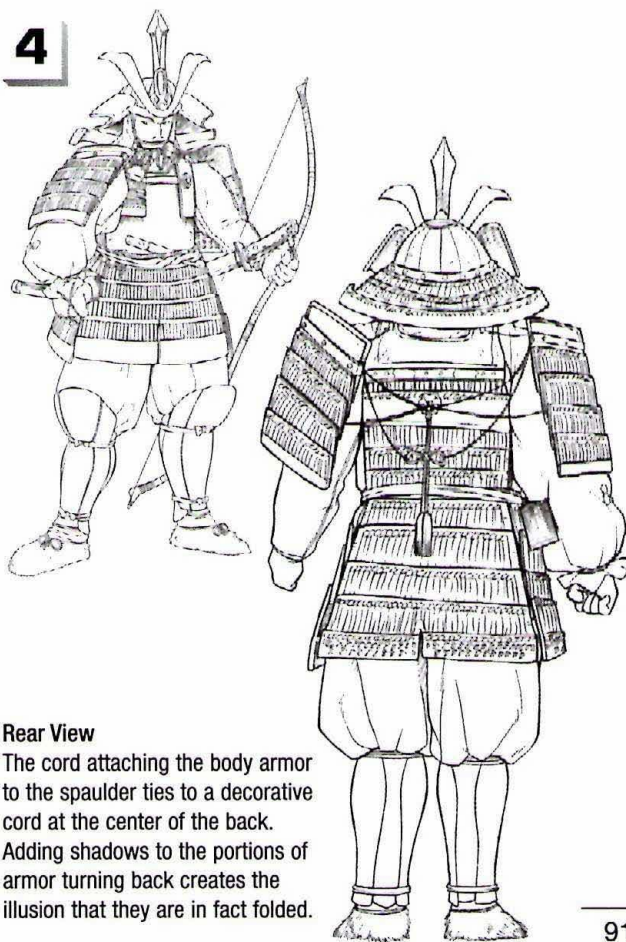
Before the social rank of "samurai" had been officially established came Japan's Warring States Period (1467-1573). During this period persons of any social status were able to gain rule, provided they possessed might. This was a time when powerful men known as "busho" who were military generals commanding samurai. Here, we see an example of "*Oyoroi*," the type of armor worn by busho and other samurai during the early Warring States Period.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Busho in Oyoroi*

1

When the armor is drawn over the body, the figure gains in girth, so I recommend drawing the arms held away from the torso.

2

The feet are held apart approximately the shoulders' width apart to give the figure a firmly planted stance. Sketch in the bow at this point as well.

3

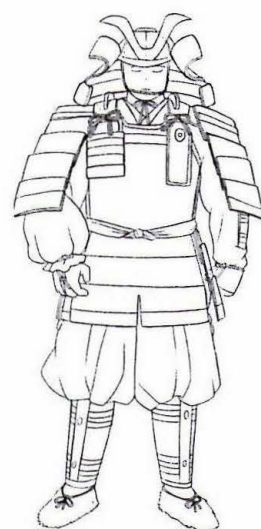
Establish the contours of the *hakama* and the *kote*. Use layered rectangles to capture the armor's form. The armor comprises the same number of overlapping panels on both the right and left flaps. The panels are evenly spaced. Increasing the width of the overlap as the spaulder panels travel up the shoulder generates a sense of depth.

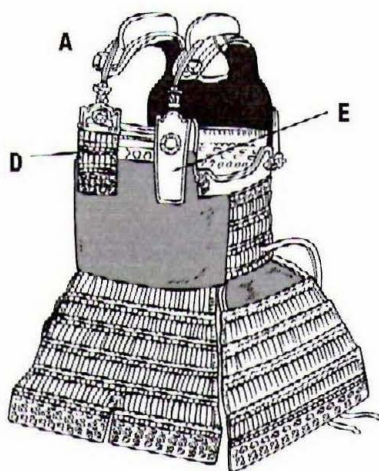
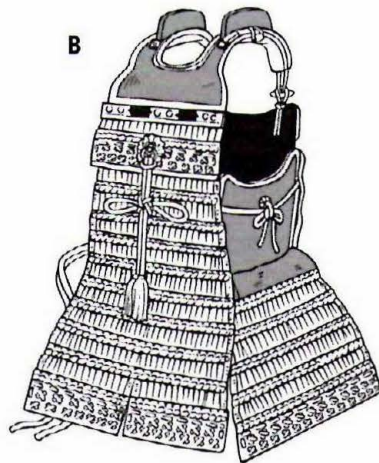
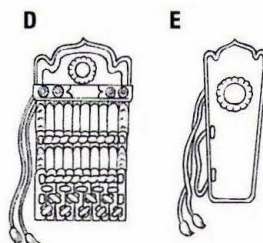
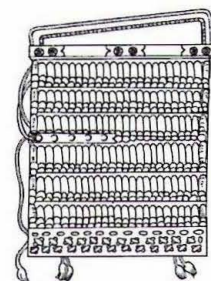
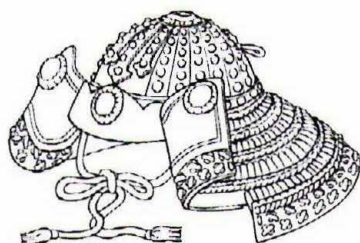
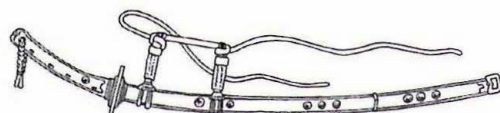
4

Rear View
The cord attaching the body armor to the spaulder ties to a decorative cord at the center of the back. Adding shadows to the portions of armor turning back creates the illusion that they are in fact folded.

Donning *yoroi*

❶ The *yoroi hitatare* is worn. The *hakama* does not have pleats. The sleeves and hem have cords passed through to cinch them.

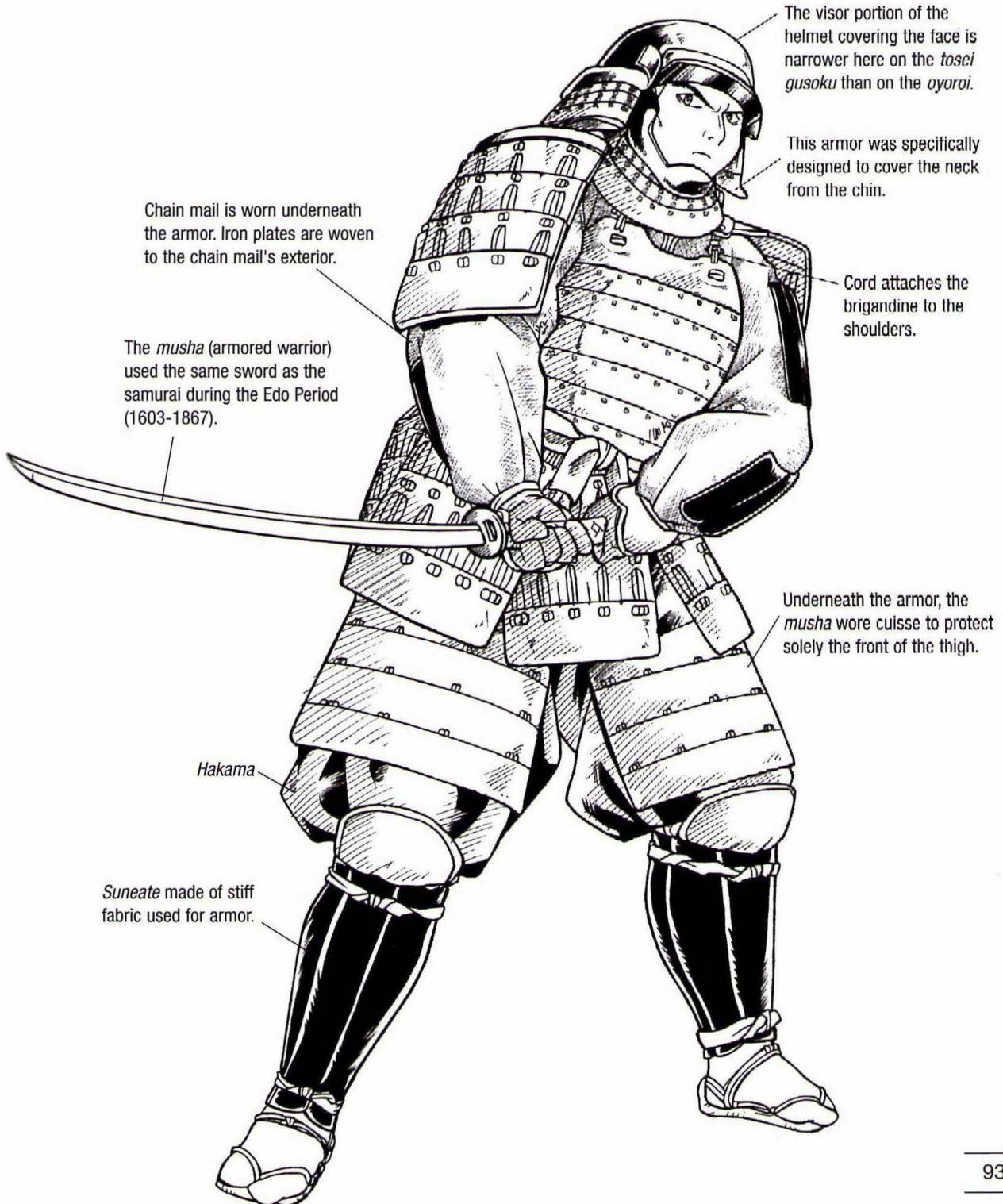
❷ The sleeves are tied at the wrists and the legs at the ankles with the cords. The *kote* (gauntlet) is put on over the left arm.

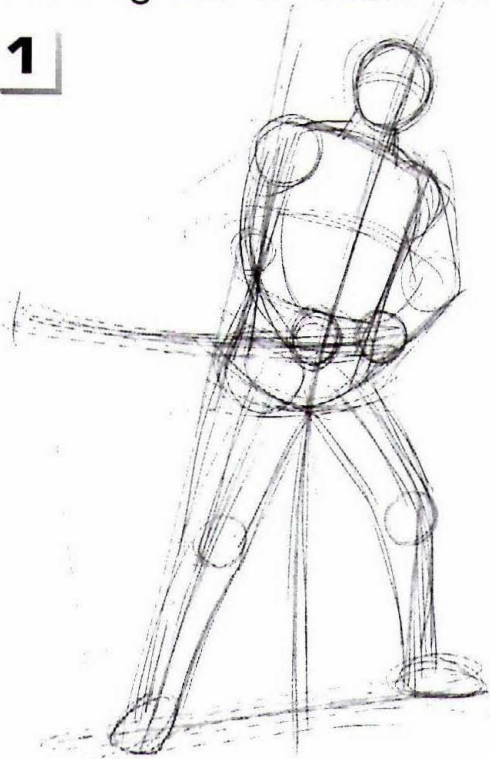
❸ The *kyahan* are pulled over the legs. Armor for the right side is donned.

❹ The body armor is put on, followed by the spaulders and then the helmet. The fur shoes are pulled on, and then the sash is cinched to finish.

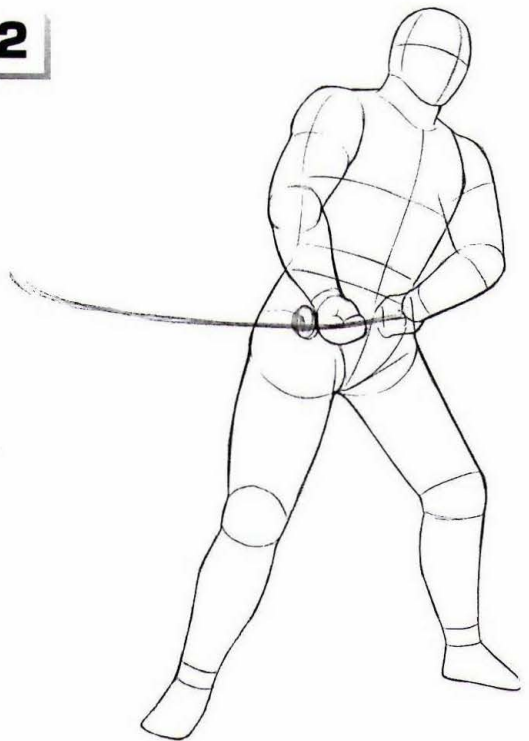
Oyoroi Details

Front: Protective gear D and E attach underneath the shoulders where the cords fasten.

Rear: Cords that attach to each piece of armor are tied to the decorative center cord.

Chest plates: D attaches to the right and E to the left.

Spaulder

The main distinguishing features of a Japanese helmet are the two side flaps turning back. As with the remainder of the armor, the piece wrapping around the neck also comprises iron plates sewn together. The headpiece contains iron rivets that serve to decorate and to strengthen the helmet.

***Tachi* (Sword)**

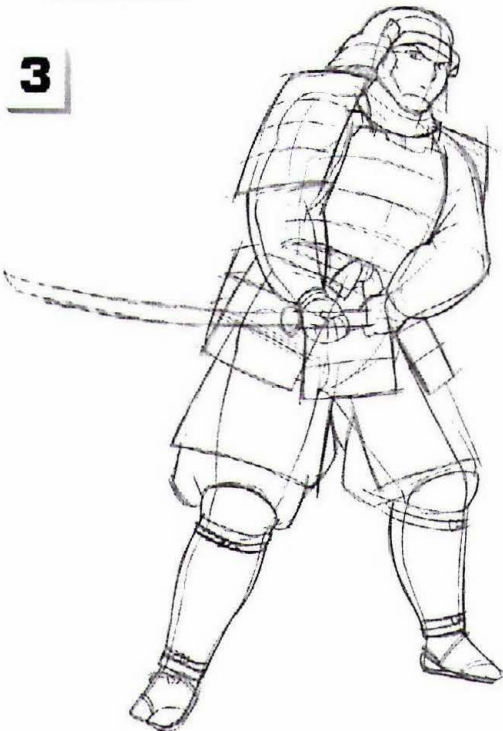
The blade curves in the opposite direction of the typical sword and is longer. Unlike with the samurai, the sheath is not worn in the sash. Instead, a cord is tied to the sash, and the scabbard is hung from that.

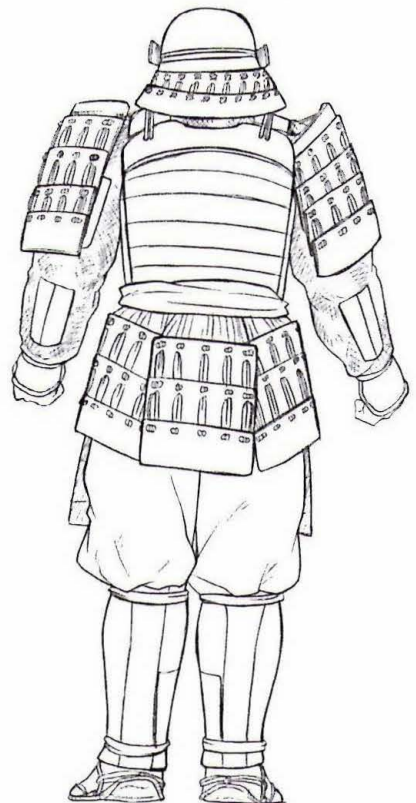
Yoroi Musha (Warrior in Armor)

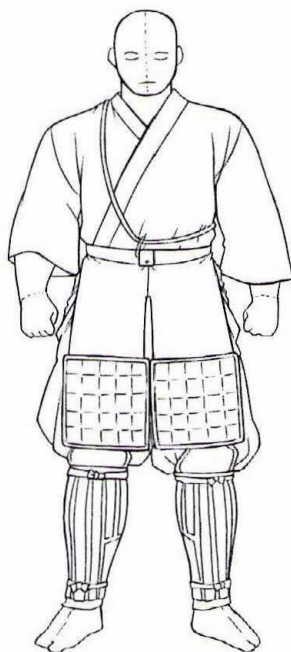
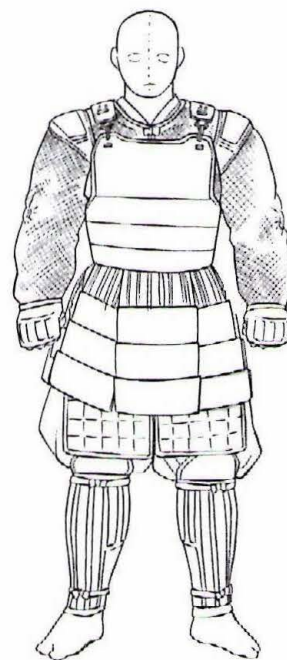
Here we see a warrior ("musha") garbed in *tosei gusoku* (or "modern armor."), which was developed in the latter half of the Warring States Period (1467-1573) and was designed to afford more comfort than the traditional "*oyoroi*" (literally "large armor" that did not have a close fit and that was designed for use with arrows and riding on horseback). *Tosei gusoku* fit closer to the body, creating a slimmer silhouette than that of *oyoroi*. However, like the *oyoroi*, *tosei gusoku* still made use of small iron plates, and the fabric was fastened using woven cords.

Drawing Basic Poses: *Yoroi Musha*

1

The *musha* turns his upper body to look to his left rear, wielding his sword. When drawing a figure dressed in armor, show the arms and legs spread widely to prevent the character from looking uncomfortable.

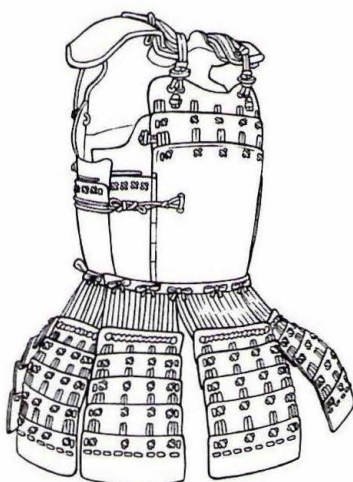
2

Draw as if the armor and clothing are resting on top of the figure.

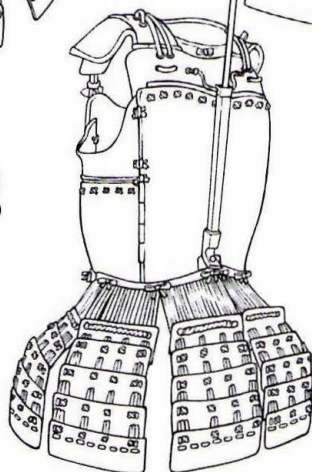
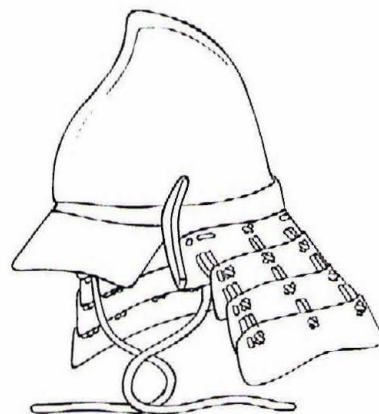
3

Adding the details instantly makes the composition look fantastic. To depict the chain mail's weave, select those regions not touched by light and render the weave using fine crosshatching.

Tosei Gusoku Rear View

Donning *Tosei Gusoku*

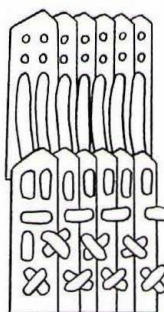
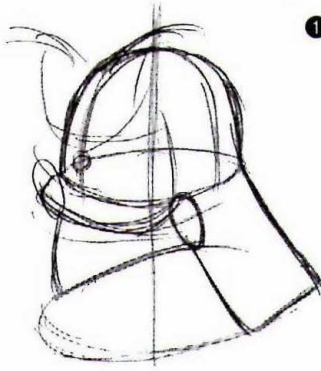
❶ First, the kimono worn underneath the armor is put on, and then the *kyahan*.

❷ The cuisse ("haidate") is slipped on, followed by greave-like armor *kyahan*.

❸ The chain mail is donned and then the brigandine. Finally, the helmet is added to complete the armor.

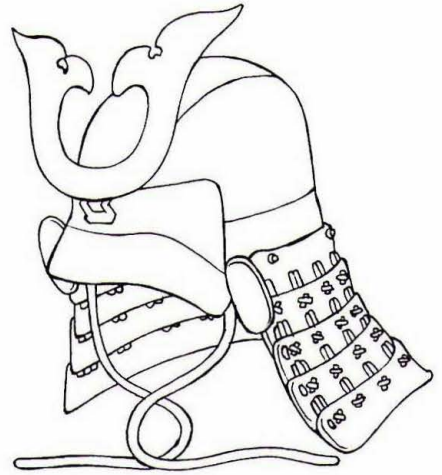
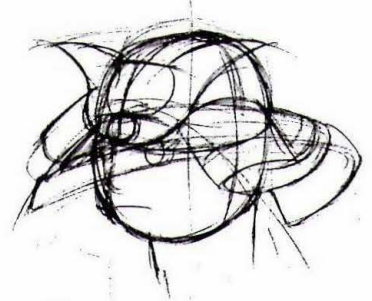
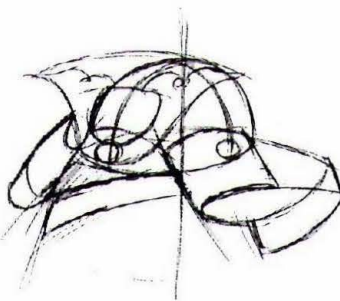
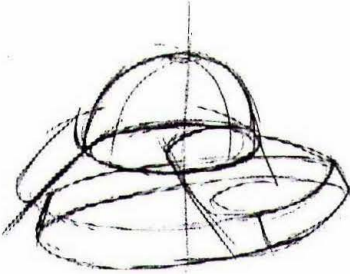
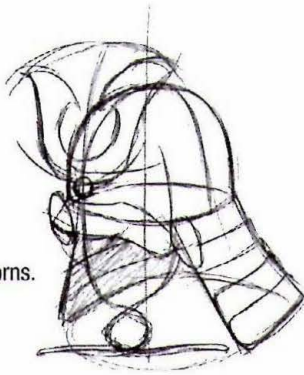
Tosei Gusoku Details

3/4 View

Rear 3/4 View

On some *tosei gusoku*, a flag bearing the crest of the troop is inserted at the warrior's back.

Helmet Details

Often, helmets were formed into intricate shapes.

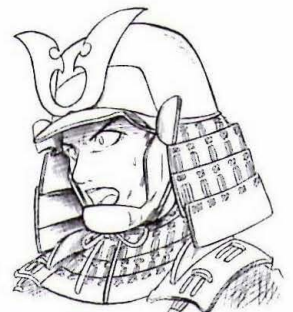
Armor Structure

The armor plates contain tiny holes at regular intervals. Cord is passed through the holes to sew the pieces together. The junctures at which one plate meets another all move along with the figure's joints, making the armor fit closely to the body.

Kabuto (Helmet)

❶ First, establish the shape, making the helmet deep-set. Add outlines of any attached forms. Draw a circle for the base of the headpiece and then add other forms, adhering to the circle. Add a narrow brim to the front.

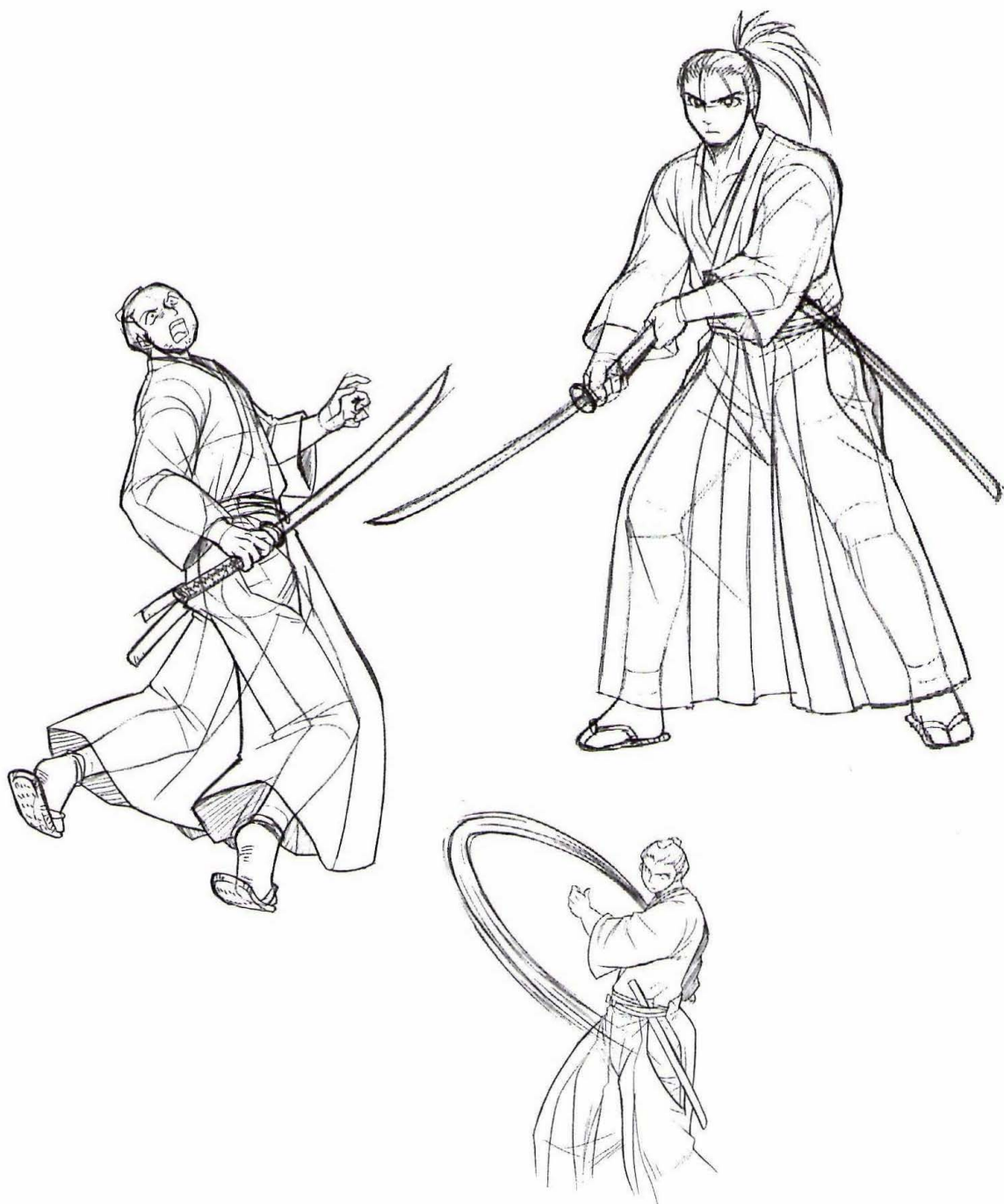
❷ Draw the helmet's decorative horns.

Completed *Toseigusoku* Helmet

❶ First, draw a semicircle for the helmet and then add the brim followed by outlines of any attached forms. Maintain an awareness of the basic form (i.e. circle) when adding the protective sidepieces.

❷ Draw the adornments. Determine the helmet's center and add decorations, keeping the right and left sides symmetrical.

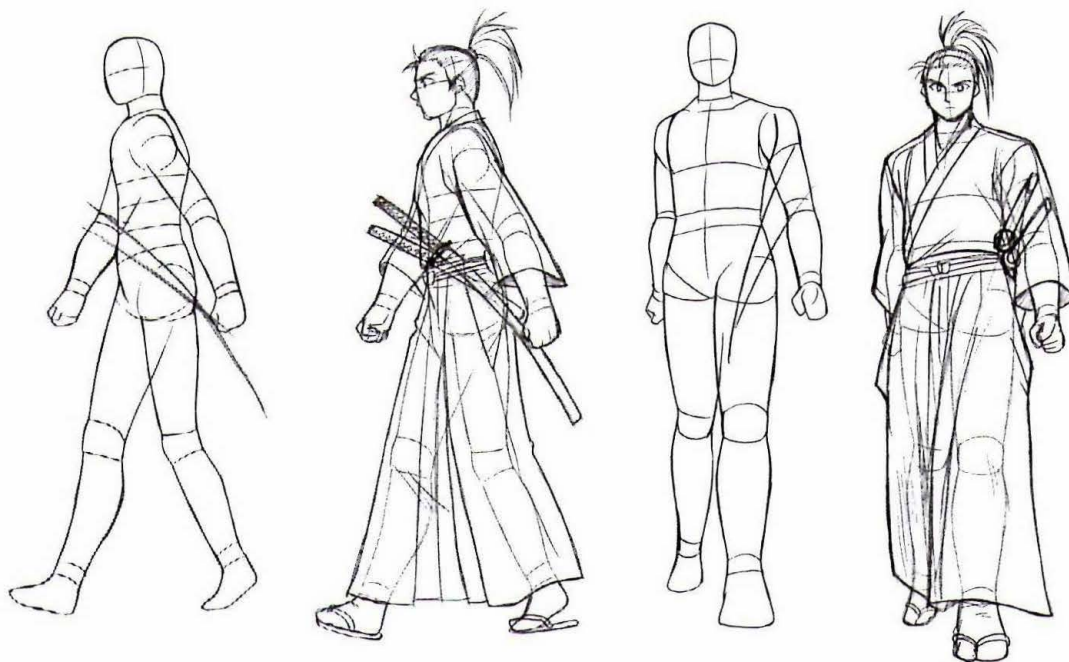
❸ A gold decorative piece rests atop the head. Add vertical gold ornamentation radiating away from this point. Draw seams at even intervals.

Completed *oyoroi* Helmet

The horns should be positioned above the eyes when the helmet is worn.

Appearance of *Bushi* with and without a Helmet
Unlike the Edo Period samurai's hairstyle, the Warring States Period *bushi*'s hair has a string woven around the base.

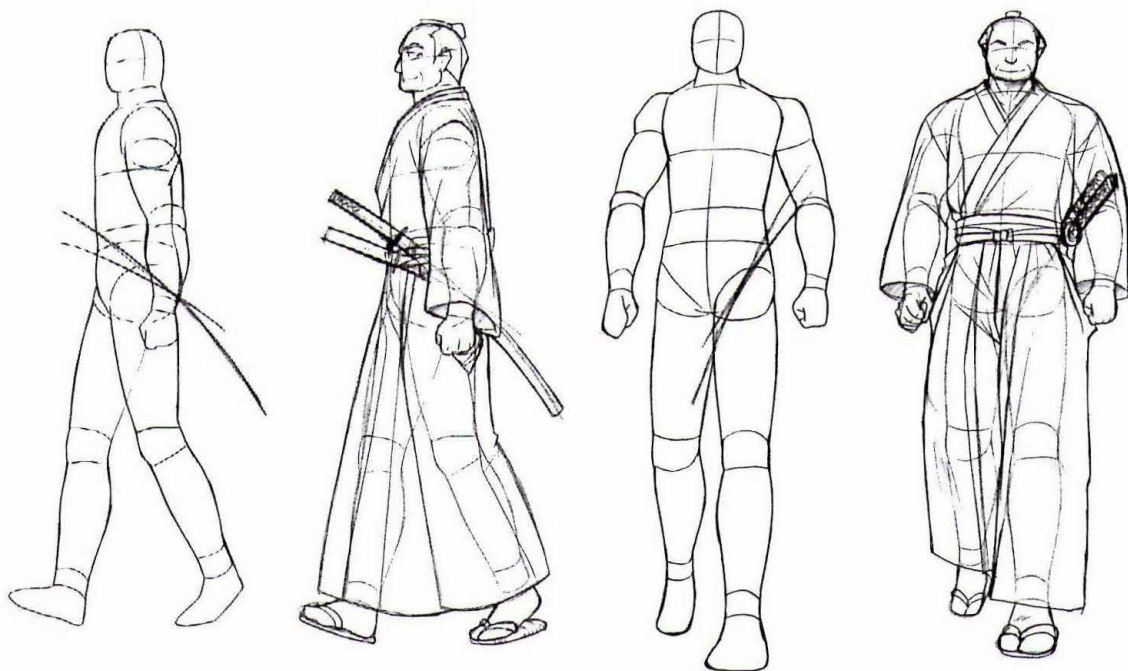
Chapter 4
Samurai in Motion

Walking

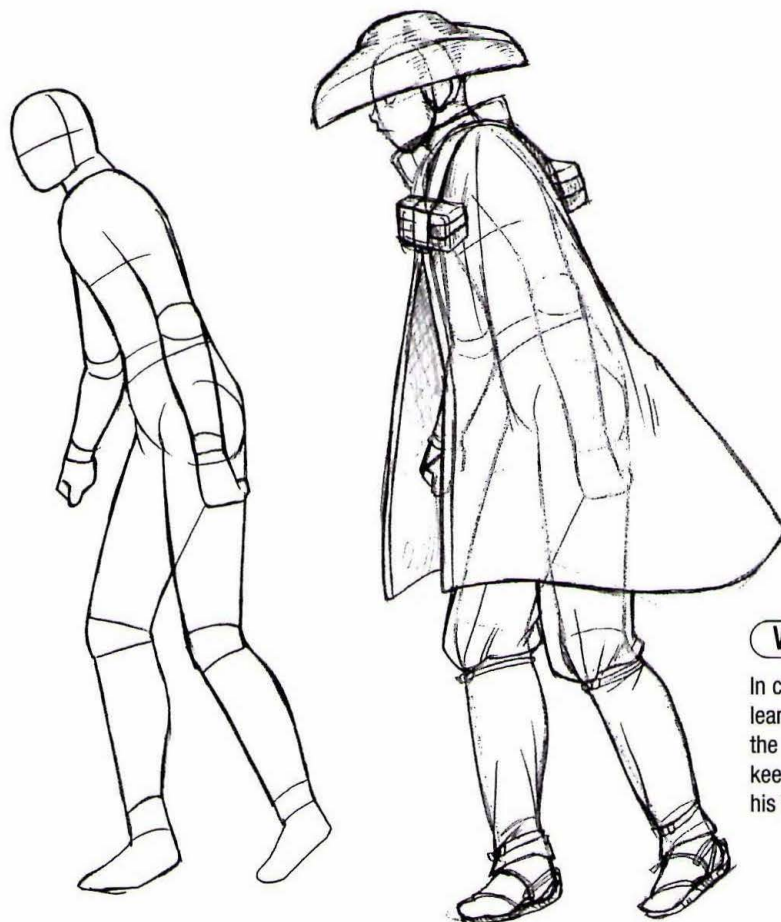
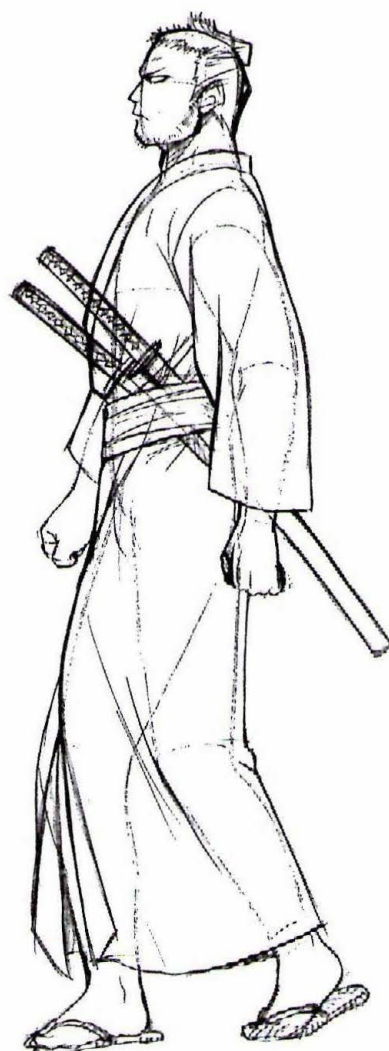
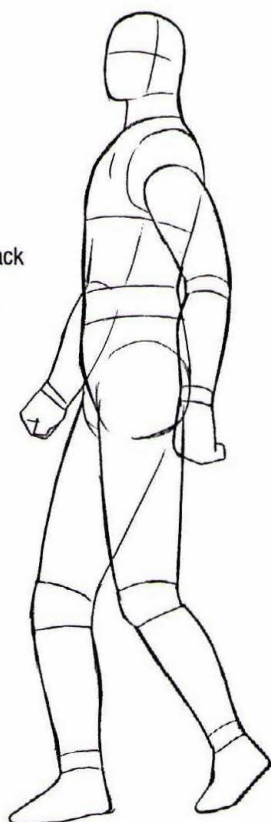
Walking Samurai

Samurai walks swinging the hand on the same side as the foot with which he is stepping forward, rather than alternating sides. This helps retain the kimono's form.

The samurai's right hand and foot (viewer's left) move toward the picture plane, while his left hand and foot (viewer's right) are swung back. The samurai leans forward just a hair, giving the appearance of walking briskly.

When the samurai's left hand and foot move forward, the figure torques slightly to the right and back, bringing it to an oblique angle with respect to the viewer. Adding hatching to shade the hem of the far foot evokes a sense of depth.

Walking *Bushi*

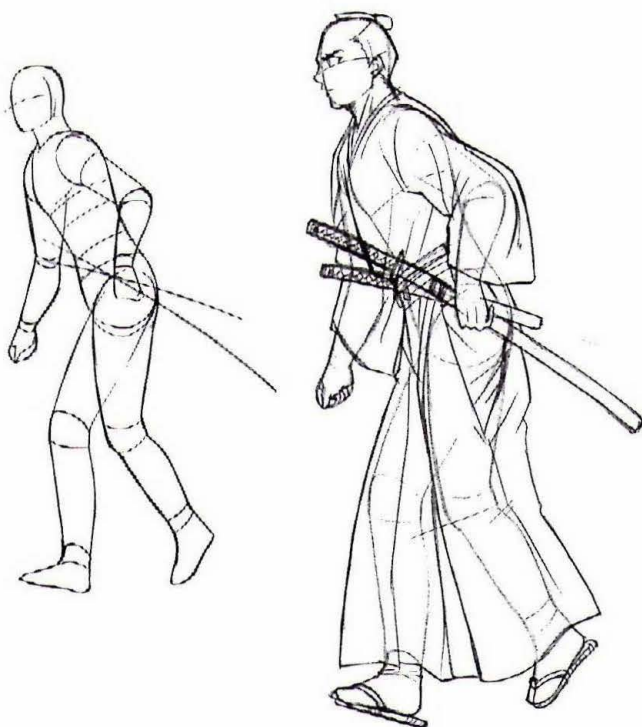
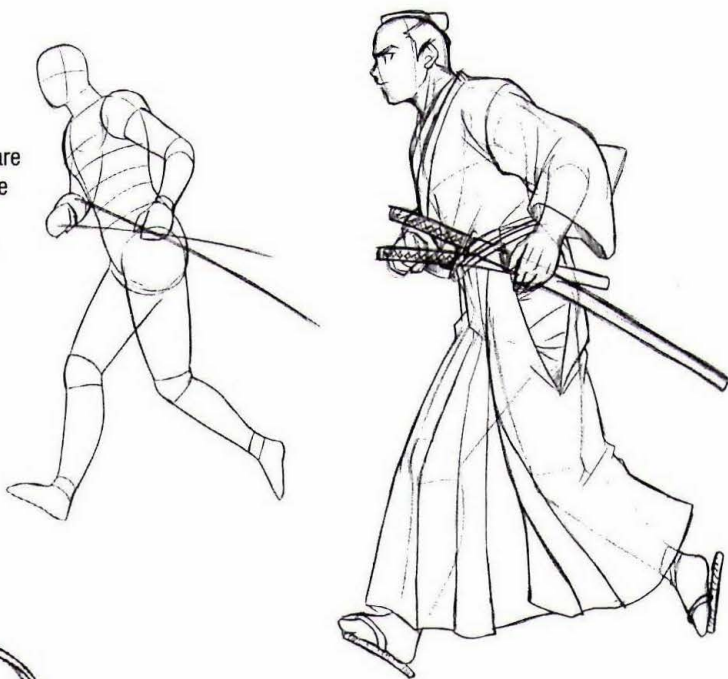
Draw the *bushi* with his chest puffed out, walking in a dignified manner. The arms are held somewhat away from the body and without much backward and forward swinging of the arms. Unlike with the samurai, hardly any torsion is present in the body. The *bushi*'s sleeves are longer than that of the samurai.

Walking *Ronin*

The *ronin* walks with a swagger, throwing back his head, shifting his center of gravity moderately rearward. The face turns slightly upward.

Walking *Toseinin*

In contrast with the *ronin*, the *toseinin* leans forward, shuffling along as if kicking the ground with his toes. The *toseinin* is keen to hide his identity, so he conceals his face with a straw hat.

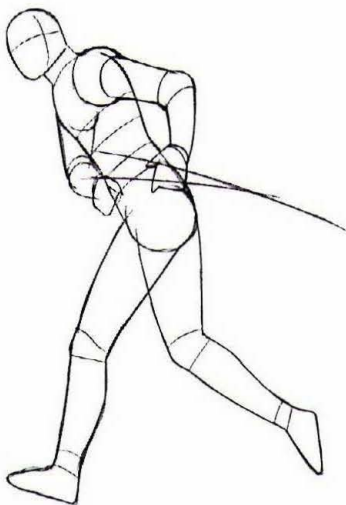
Running

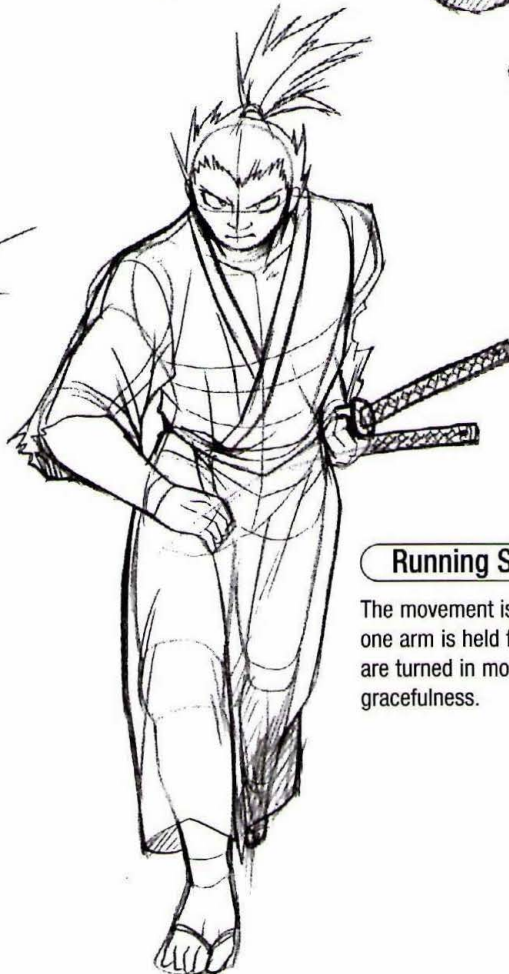
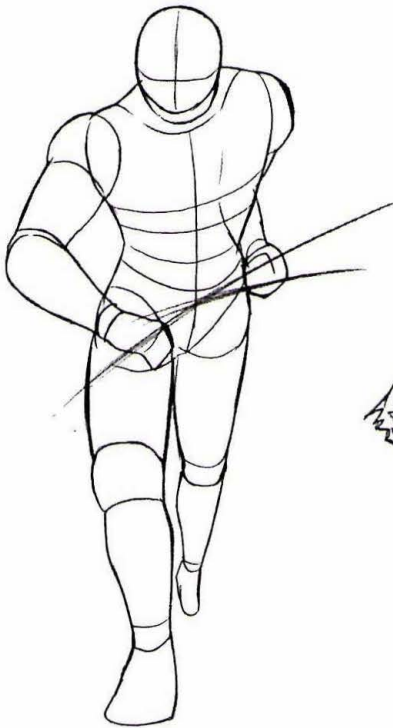
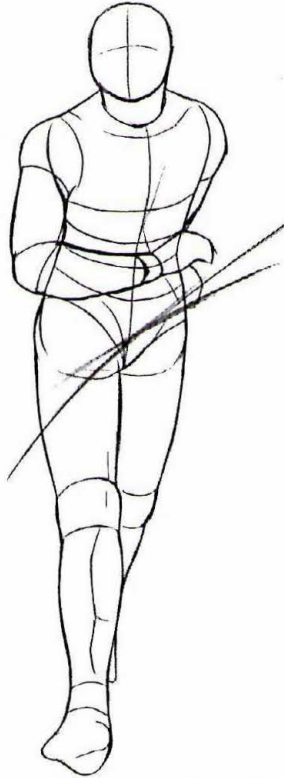
Running Samurai

The motions of the hands and feet on each side are uniform. The samurai holds the scabbard with one hand, while lightly reaching for the hilt with the other hand. The figure moderately leans forward. The head faces directly forward. The *hakama*'s pleats change in appearance according to the directions of the right and left feet.

Breaking into a Run

The stride is short, and the arms are still held low. The front hand lightly touches the sword. Adding gestures that give hits to what the samurai's next actions might be allows you to portray the initial stages of a given action.

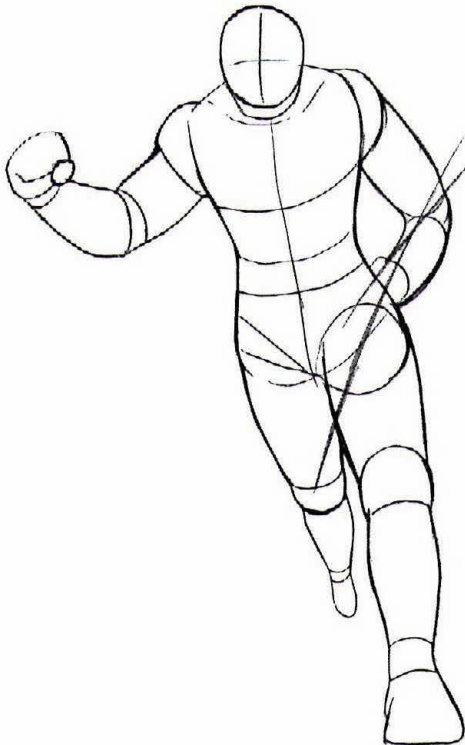
Increasing Speed

The figure leans even more deeply forward. The head faces down.

Running Samurai, Front View A

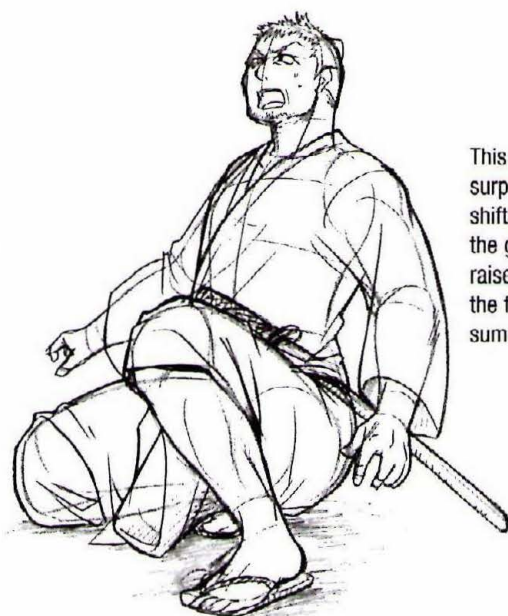
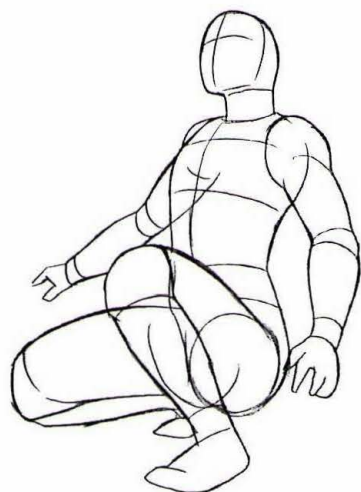
The figure's right foot is forward, causing the body to torque to the left. Showing the back foot covered in the *hakama*'s shadow generates a sense of depth. Give inspiring, gallant characters like this slim builds.

Running Samurai, Front View B

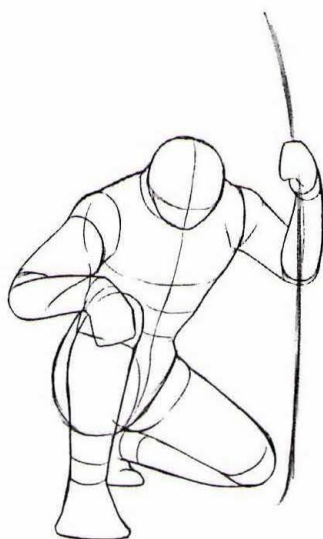
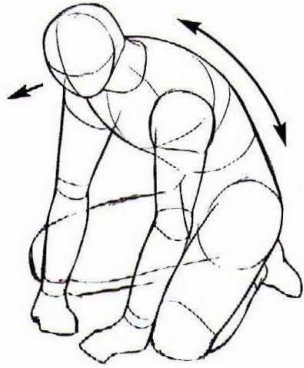
The movement is similar to that of figure A, but one arm is held far from the body, and the toes are turned in moderately, eliminating the air of gracefulness.

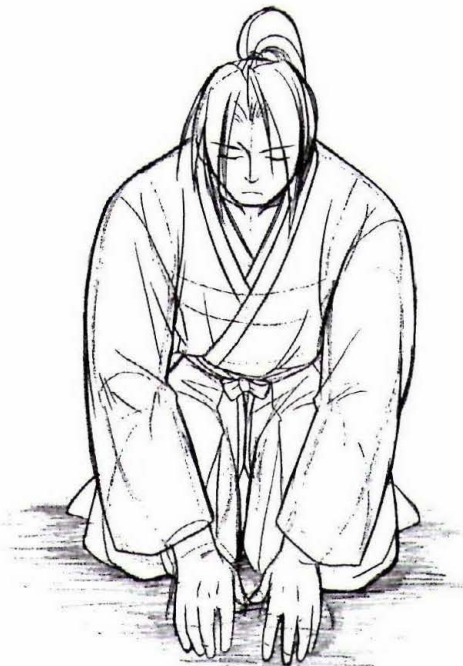
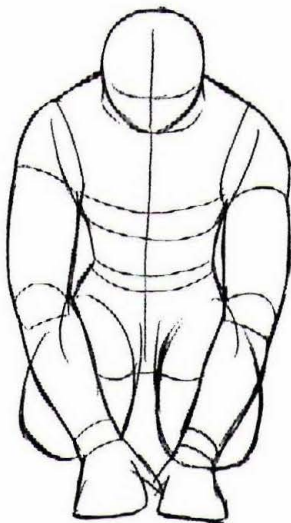
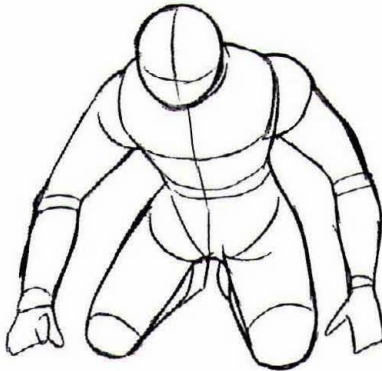
Running

When drawing a figure running not in the manner of the samurai, but using more modern motions, show the hand on the opposite side as the forward foot swung to the front and vice versa. While this is not an "authentic" samurai running style, it is one technique for making the figure's movement clear to the viewer.

Kneeling

Samurai after Battle

Show the samurai holding his sword in an upright position with his back slightly rounded and one leg firmly planted on the ground from the hip to the knee. This projects the impression of a samurai weary from battle. Leave the mouth half opened to create a look of exhaustion. Use short, hatched strokes to add soiling to the sleeves, elbows, knees, soles of the feet, stomach, and back.

This figure shows a *ronin* leaning back in surprise. The figure's center of gravity shifts to the rear. Show one knee touching the ground. Note that showing both knees raised off the ground would suggest that the figure is about to turn a backward summersault.

Here, a samurai kneels in defeat. He uses the sword for support. He looks down, wearing a dejected expression on his face. The sword sits near the knee resting on the ground, s*tabl*lizing the figure. Note that the knee resting on the ground is pulled further back than the left foot with the upright knee.

Kneeling

This is a submissive pose with both knees and hands resting on the ground. The head faces downward and does not turn up. The figure is leaning forward with both knees on the ground, causing the toes to bend and the heels to rise while the *zori* remain on the ground. The fingers are angled inward (i.e. toward each other).

Here, a samurai adopts a subservient pose to escape his commanding *bushi*'s ire. He glances upward slightly. The hips are not lowered, so the upper body leans dramatically forward. Using positioning the head and shoulders as if all three were lying along a semicircle produces the feeling of a bowing figure.

This is the pose of a loyal samurai. He is a retainer, known as a "*kerai.*" His posture is straight, and he sits in the formal *seiza* pose with his legs tucked neatly underneath. Both hands are positioned side by side directly in front of the figure.

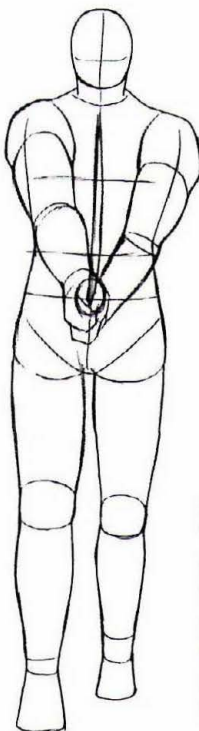
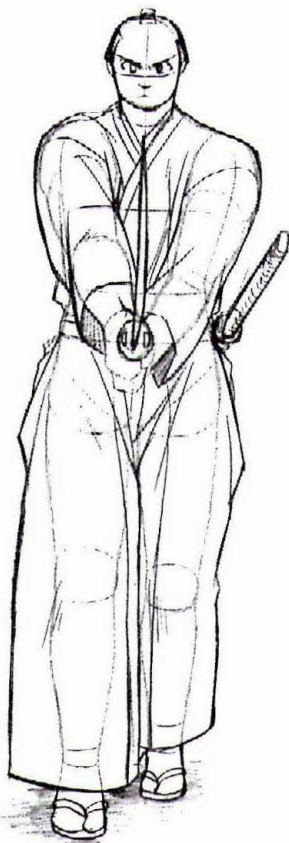
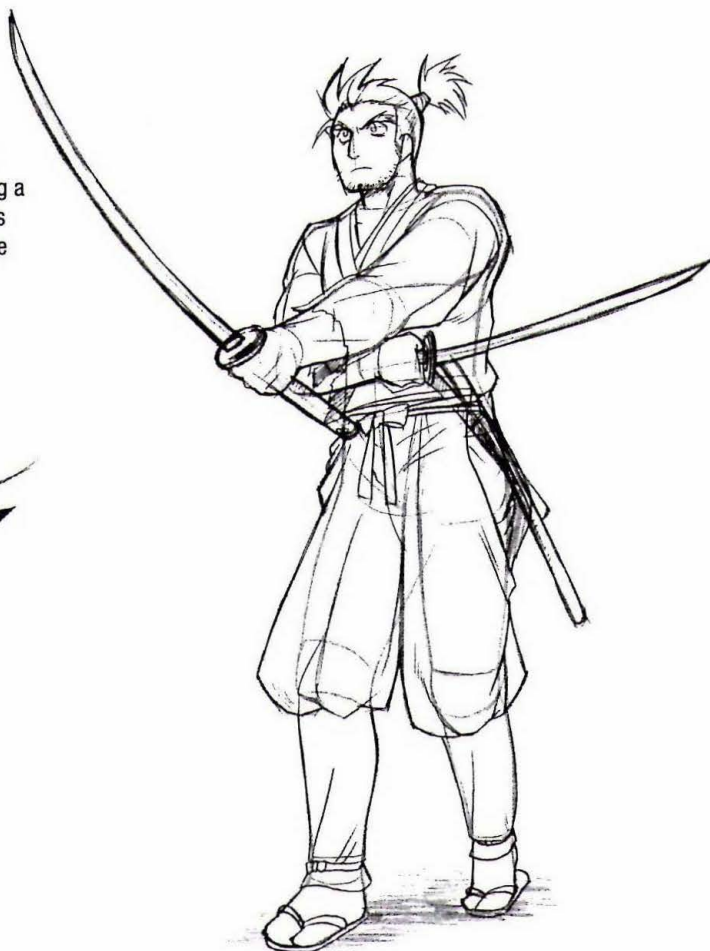
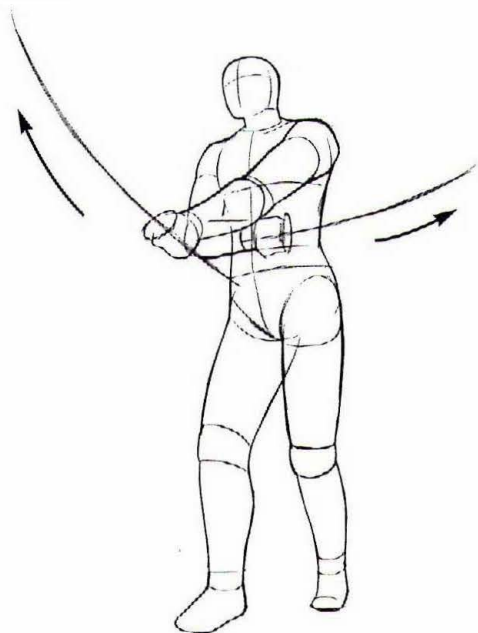
Wielding a Sword

Basic Stance

The elbows are knees are kept loose and are bent slightly. The body is relaxed. Ensure that you achieve visual balance between the sword's length and the hilt. If the sword is too long or too short, it will not have the look of a convincing samurai sword. Draw the hilt's length at a ratio of 1:3 with respect to the blade.

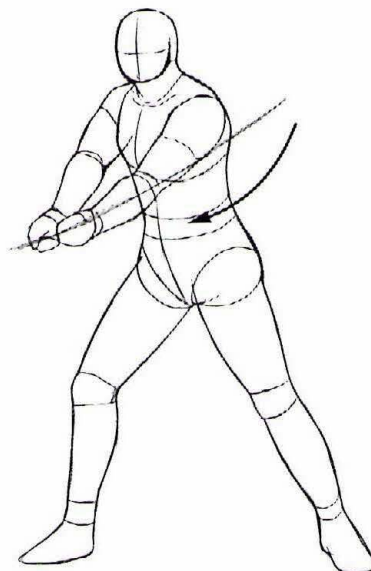
Wielding a Sword

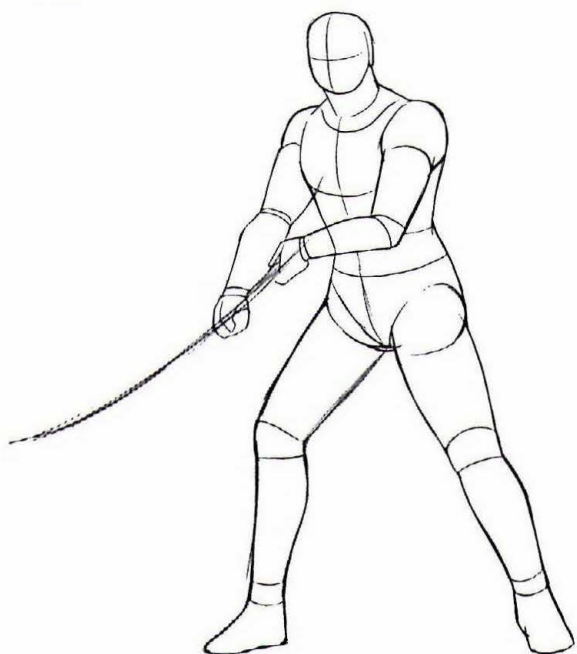
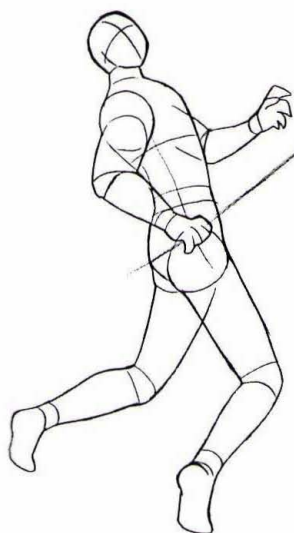
Wielding Two Swords

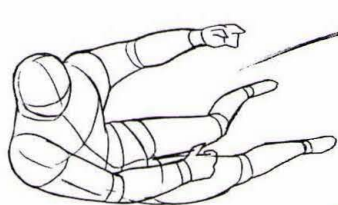
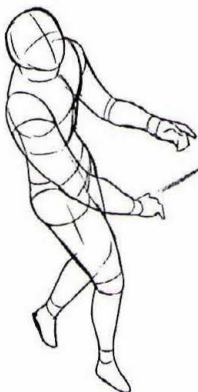
First, establish where to position the arms and in which direction the sword will face. When drawing a samurai with two swords, showing the two blades pointed in different direction allows you to achieve visual balance and an impressive composition.

Front View of Samurai Wielding Two Swords
The blade faces the picture plane, causing it to appear short. Maintain consciousness of the blade's thickness when drawing. Give the blade a sharp point to make it appear facing upward. Because the right hand covers the left hand when grasping the sword, the right shoulder appears slightly higher than the left when viewed from straight on.

Striking and Being Struck

Striking in a Downward Motion

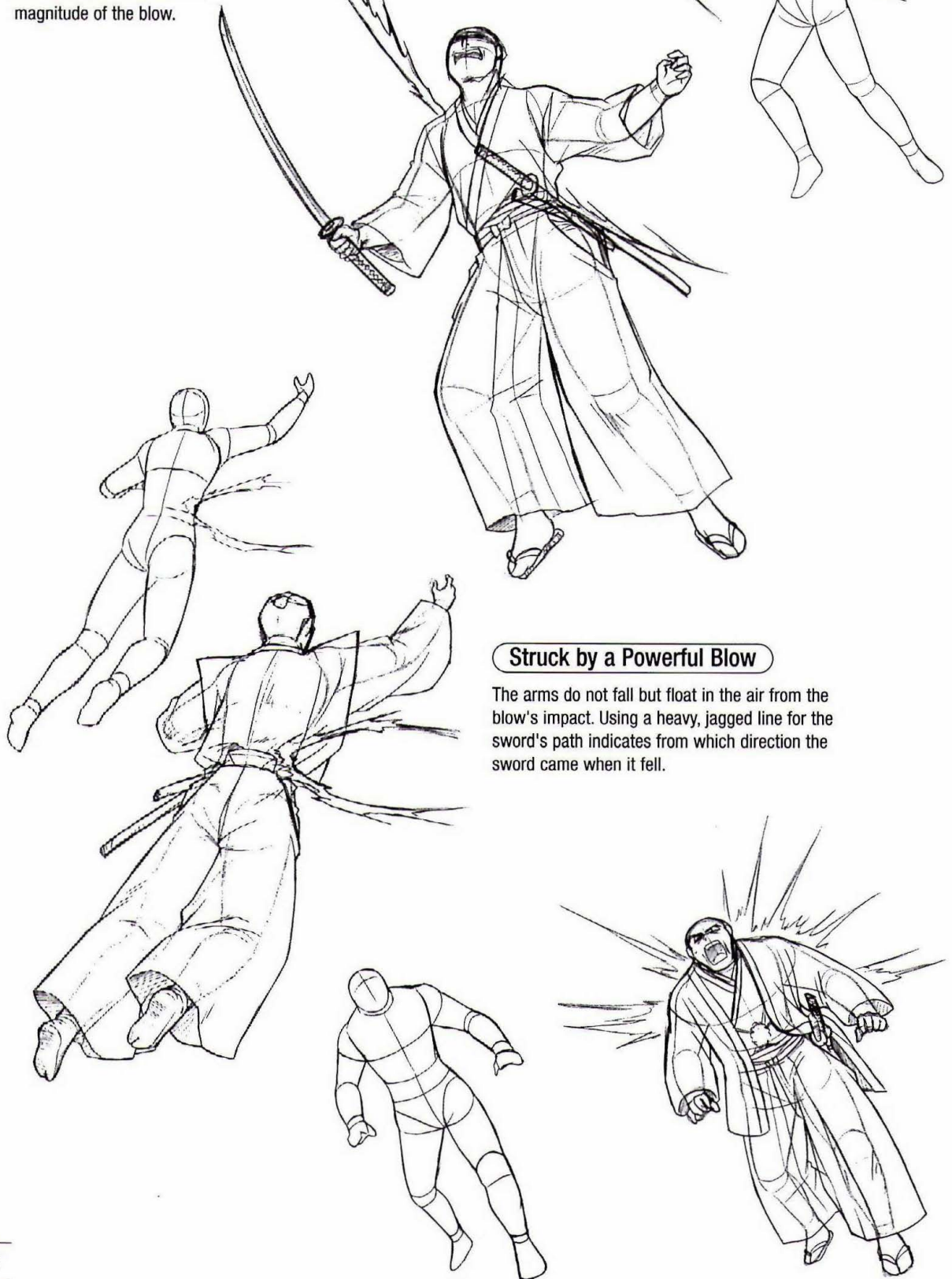
The feet should be spread apart further than the shoulders. The sword is swung downward using a single stroke that cases the body to torque to the left and back. The edge of the blade should face outward.

Here, the figure swings the sword from the back, bringing it down at an angle. Consequently, the body torques in the opposite directions as Figure A, namely to the right and front. Both shoulders lower. The samurai steps simultaneously with his right foot as well, causing ripples to form underneath the right hip of the *hakama*. While the legs are not visible from underneath the *hakama*, maintain an awareness of the knees' locations when you draw ripples in the cloth.

Striking and Being Struck

Wounded Samurai

1. This figure shows a samurai who has been struck by the enemy. He is off-balance. The shock of having received the blow shows in the figure's motions. The head and back arc backward, while the knees buckle forward. The *hakama*'s interior is visible. Drawing the eyes and mouth wide open suggests a stunned reaction.

2. Here we see a samurai collapsing. Tension leaves the body, and the sword falls from the hand. The figure completely loses stability and crumples to the side. The key point here is the facial expression, which should display a combination of agony, shock, and confusion.

3. Now the samurai collapses on the ground. The body is limp. Drawing the body as if forming a "V" with respect to the ground, positioning the bottom of the V at the figure's center facilitates creating the illusion of a collapsed figure.

Striking and Being Struck

Struck in the Back

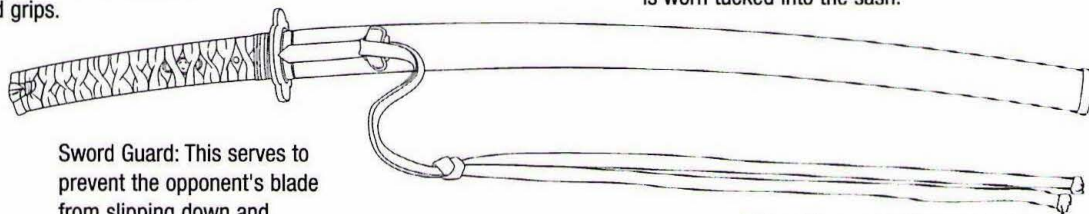
Adding jagged effect lines coming from the back indicates the magnitude of the blow.

Struck by a Powerful Blow

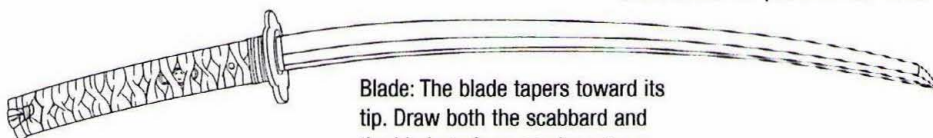
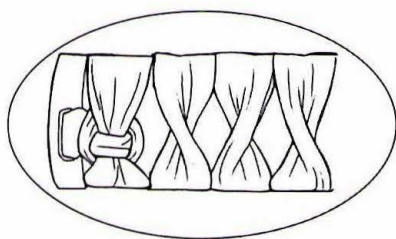
The arms do not fall but float in the air from the blow's impact. Using a heavy, jagged line for the sword's path indicates from which direction the sword came when it fell.

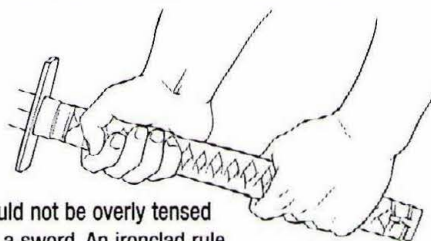
Sword Makeup

The Hilt: A leather cord wraps around the part the hand grips.

When drawing a close-up of a sword, including the hilt creates visually impressive results.

Scabbard: This functions as the sword's sheath. Longer and wider than the sword itself, the scabbard is worn tucked into the sash.

Sword Guard: This serves to prevent the opponent's blade from slipping down and striking the hand.

Tying this cord to the sash holds the scabbard in place on the sash.

Blade: The blade tapers toward its tip. Draw both the scabbard and the blade to form an elegant arc.

The leather cord wrapped around the hilt ties at the base.

The Basics in Grasping the Sword

The hands should not be overly tensed when grasping a sword. An ironclad rule dictates that space must be left between the hands.

Depicting a Sword Swung in a Downward/Upward Motion

When showing the sword swung in a downward motion, use speed lines to render the entirety of the sword as an afterimage. Draw the lines in the direction of the stroke to evoke a sense of speed.

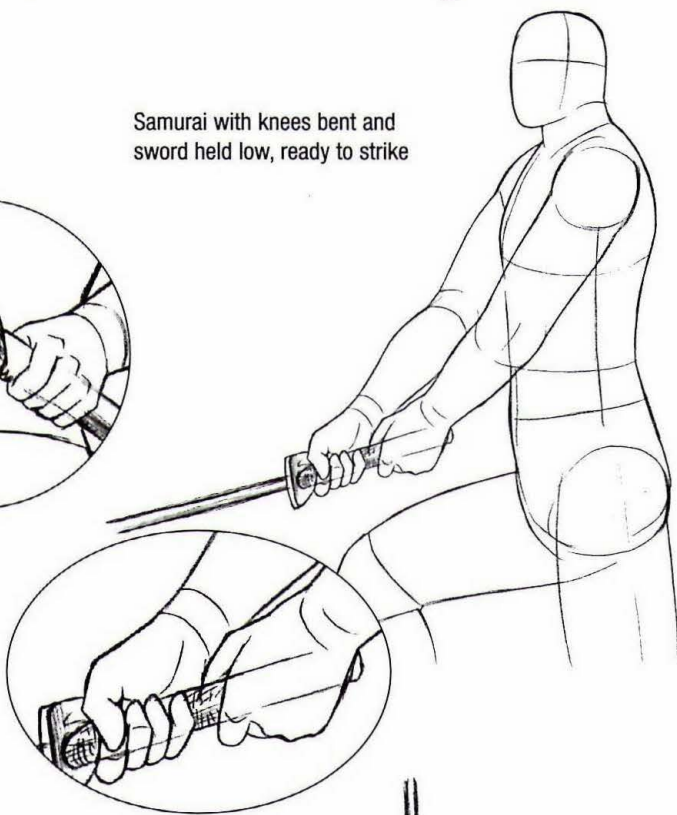
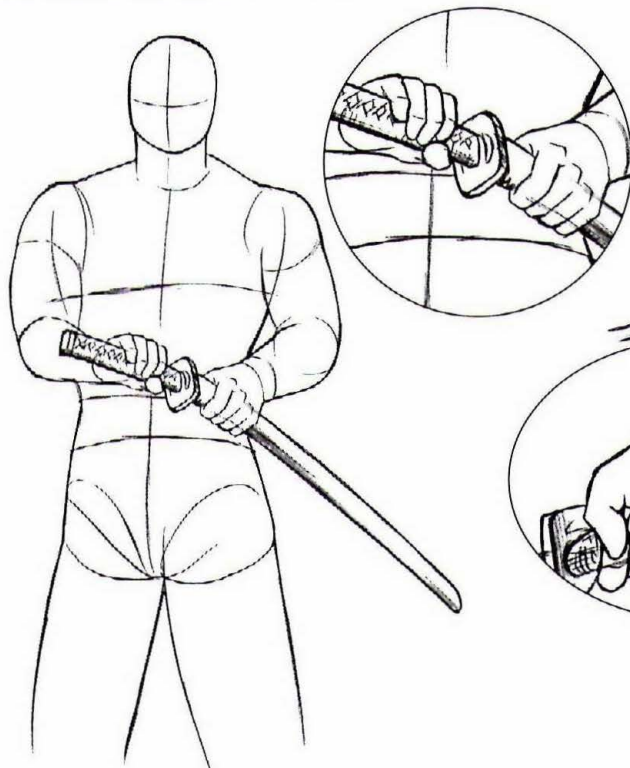
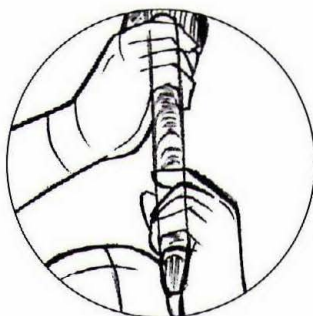
Use speed lines to connect the moment that the sword is completely unsheathed to before the samurai begins to swing the sword.

When showing the sword swung in an upward motion, draw an afterimage of sword in a raised position near the picture plane.

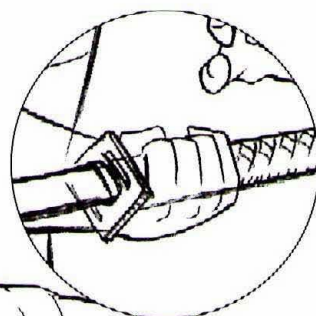
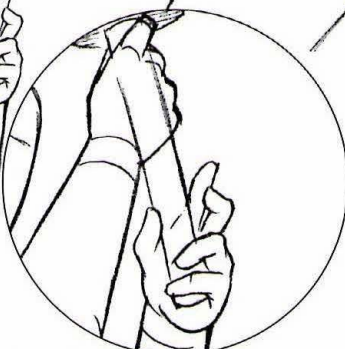
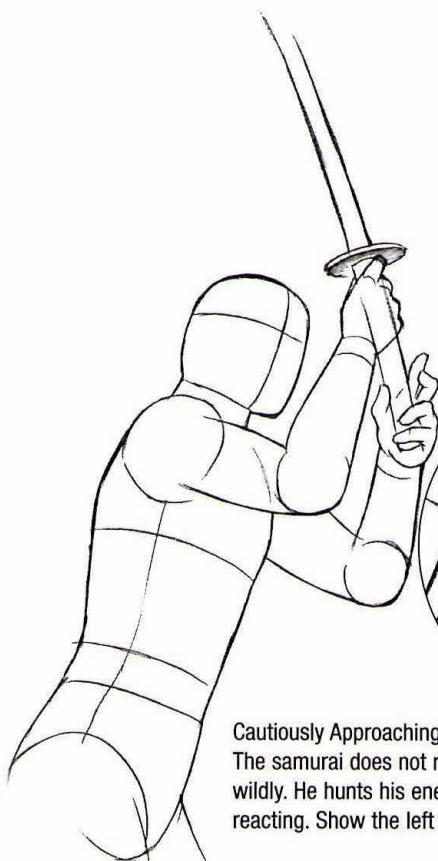
Swordsmanship, Samurai-Style

Unsheathing the Sword

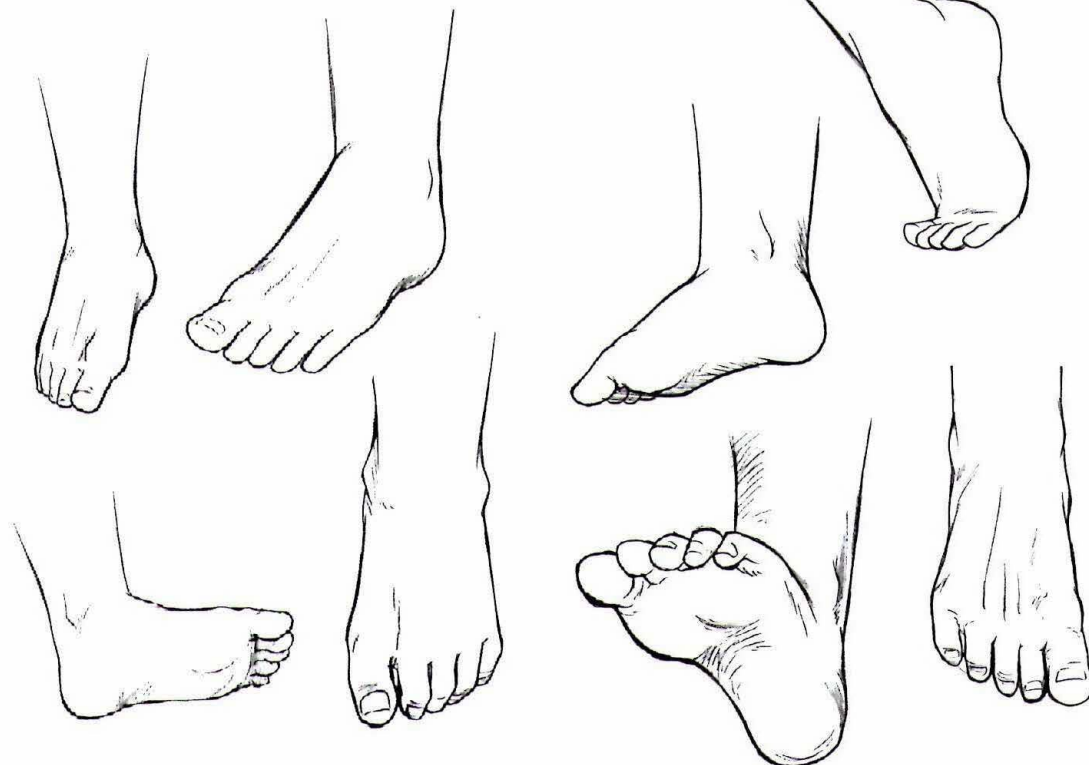
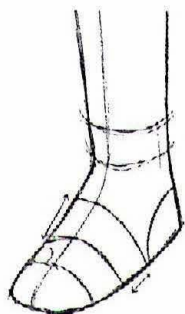
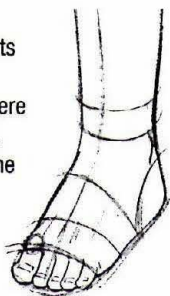
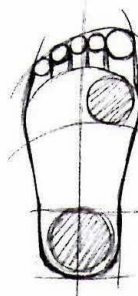
The samurai holds the hilt using the same hand with which he writes. The scabbard is tucked into the sash to prevent it from shifting.

Samurai with knees bent and sword held low, ready to strike

Samurai with sword held over head, ready to strike

The hand is relaxed. The trick to drawing a relaxed hand is to show some of the fingers not touching the hilt and the thumb directed outward. The thumb would be angled inward if the hand were tensed.

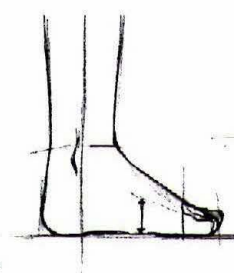
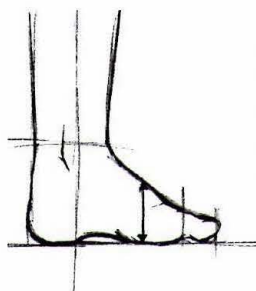
Mid-Battle

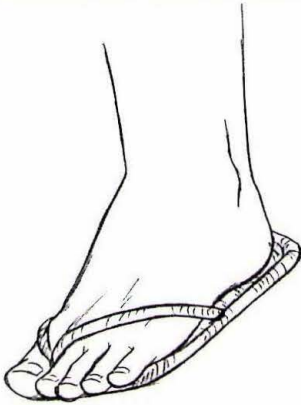
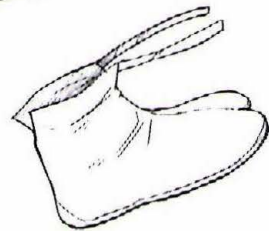
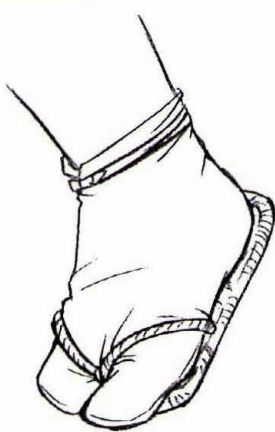
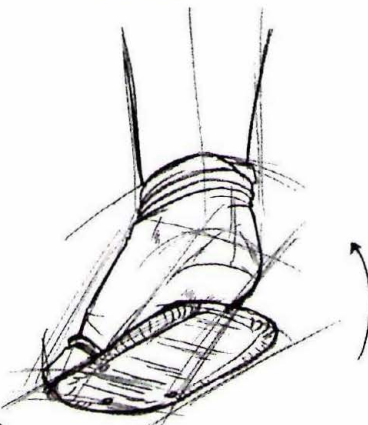
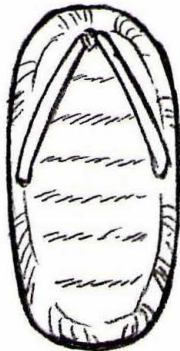
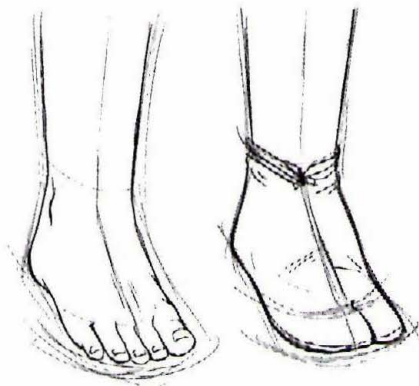
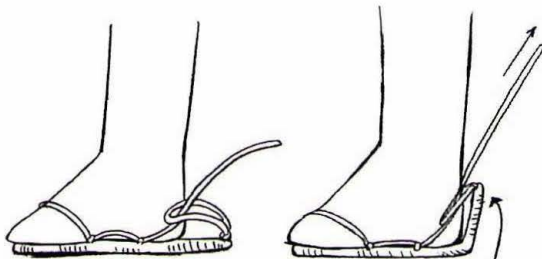
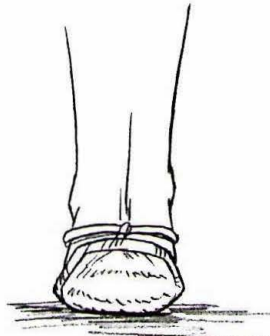
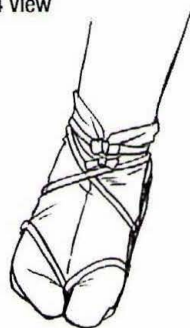
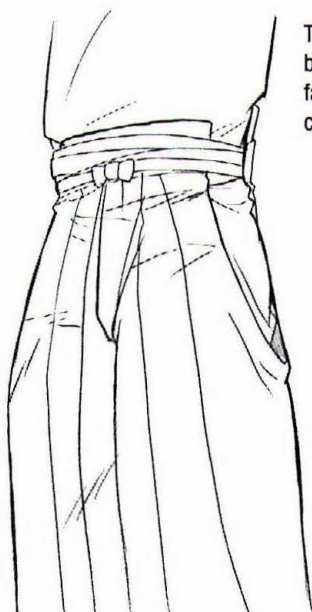
Tensions grow in fighting scenes, so the samurai grips the hilt tighter, causing the thumb no longer to face outward.

The samurai holds his empty left hand so that he can swiftly move it in the next motion to grip the hilt.

Cautiously Approaching the Opponent
The samurai does not rush pell-mell at the opponent, striking wildly. He hunts his enemy, reading his enemy's movements, and reacting. Show the left hand also holding the sword.

Foot, Feet

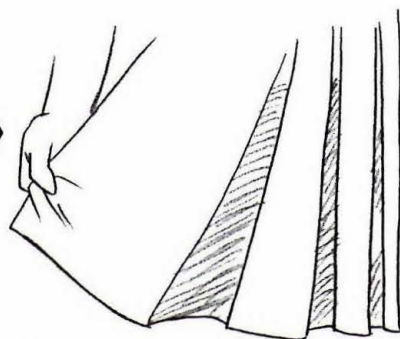
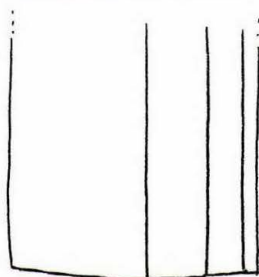
When drawing feet, maintain awareness of undulations caused by muscles and bone. Use hatching to shade.

Feet

First, draw the general exterior angles and then add contour layouts for the toes, the heels, and the ankles. Use circles to establish where the big toe's knuckle is positioned. The foot's arch broadens toward the inside of the foot.

Sole of the Foot

Be aware that there are two locations where the flesh rises into a mound on the foot's sole: underneath the knuckle of the big toe and the heel.

The knuckle of the big toe rises into a bump.

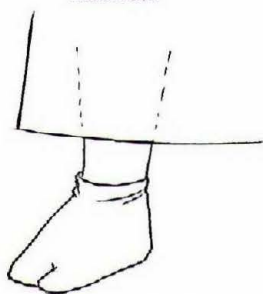
Foot in Profile

Foot Seen from the Exterior: The small toe is the most shallow. Position the ankle on the outside of the foot just a bit lower than the ankle on the inside, about the same level as the top of the little toe. The foot's arch is scarcely visible.

Foot Seen from Interior: The big toe is the highest. The foot's arch is visible. The big toe's knuckle bulges. The interior ankle is slightly higher than the exterior.

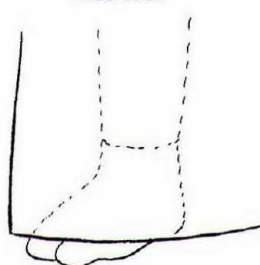
Draw the *zori* so that some room is left at the heel.

Hakama

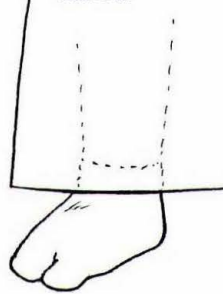
The *hakama* is worn not at the waist but at the hips. The sash pulls the fabric near it. Draw an abundance of creases to illustrate this.

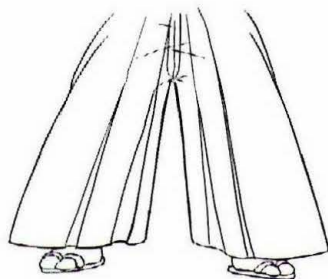
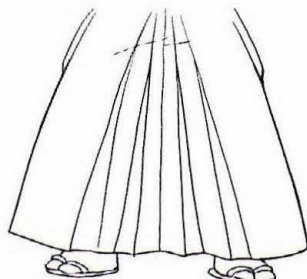
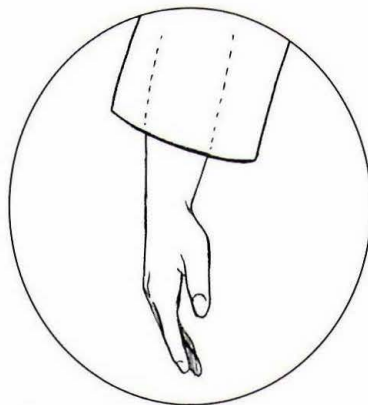
Hakama Pleats

Pleat Interior
To draw convincing pleats, use staggered levels for the pleats' interior and exterior hemlines

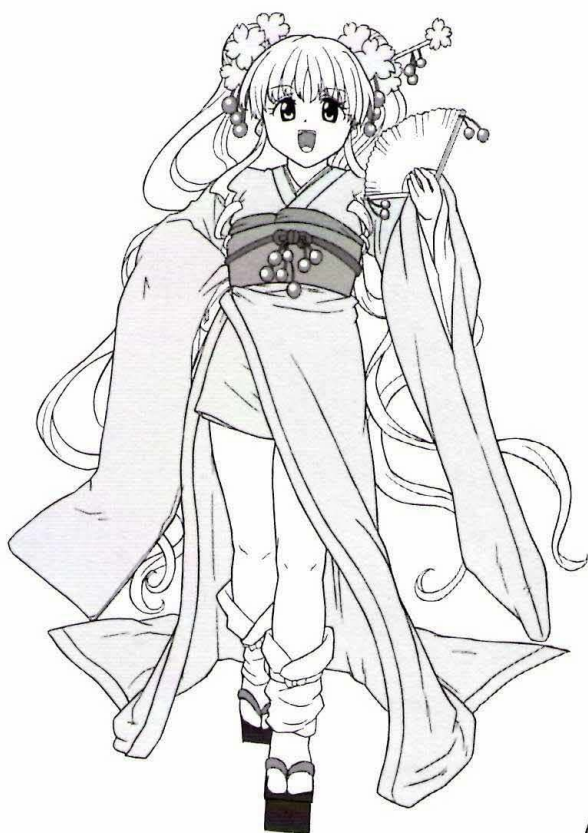
Hakama Length

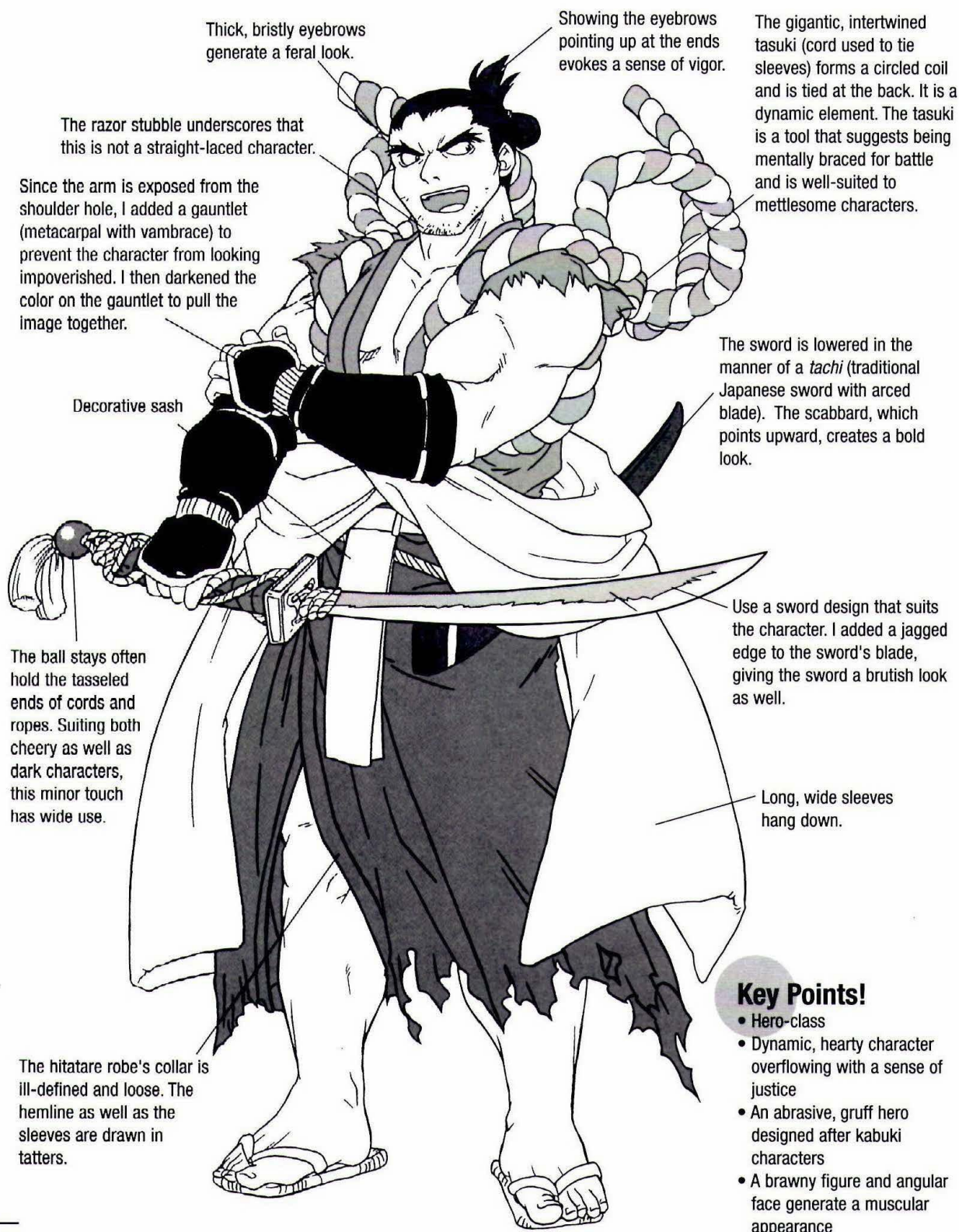
Incorrect

The *hakama*'s hemline comes above the ankle, making it too short and unattractive.

Incorrect

If the hemline is too long, the samurai will have difficulty moving.

Correct

Ankle-length is standard.

Hakama Styles

Culotte-Style: This is the most common form of *hakama* worn by samurai.

Skirt-Style: This form is suited to female samurai and handsome male characters with delicate features.

The kimono sleeves should end at the wrist. Avoid making the sleeves so long that they hide the hand. (A long sleeve hinders the samurai's use of his sword, so it would be unnatural.)

Chapter 5 Varying Character Design

Kabuki-Style Samurai

Samurai come in a variety of forms. There are strong samurai, weak samurai, caring samurai, and heartless samurai. Adding other elements to our notions of what constitutes a "samurai" makes it all the more interesting. On the next few pages, we present samurai drawn in a "kabuki" style as such an added element.

Key Points!

- Hero-class
- Dynamic, hearty character overflowing with a sense of justice
- An abrasive, gruff hero designed after kabuki characters
- A brawny figure and angular face generate a muscular appearance

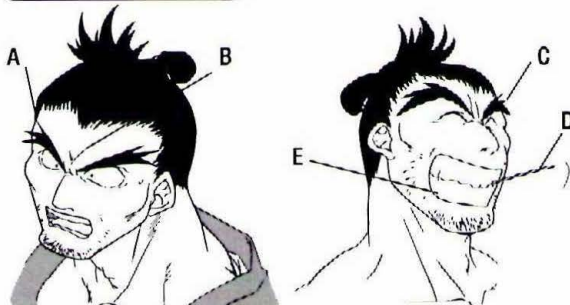
Rear View

Note the scabbard's position and the length of the kimono's hem.

Basic Face Design

Above All Else, Emphasize a Sense of Masculinity and Heroism

- Draw lines at the brow to suggest protruding muscles.
- To draw striking eyebrows, make them approximately the same width as the face.
- Make the jaw broad to create a manly look.
- Determine where to draw razor stubble. Draw the stubble particularly concentrated around the chin.
- Draw a thick neck. The neck alone evokes the sense of a strong build.

Facial Expressions

Giving a Dynamic Personality Dramatic Facial Expressions

Left: A shocked expression

A. Draw the eyebrows arcing upward using straight lines.
B. Draw diagonal lines above the eyebrows directed toward the bridge of the nose to create the sense of a furrowed brow.

Right: Pleased as punch: Upturned face

C. Use upward arcing curves for the eyebrows to create a jolly expression. Show the eyebrows protruding from the face's silhouette.
D. Show the toothpick in the samurai's mouth tilting upward. This is a touch suggesting the samurai is in high spirits.
E. Show plenty of teeth.

On Stylization

Stylization is used to exaggerate comical elements or when the character is used as a commercial or promotional mascot. First, determine which features distinguish the character or attract the viewer's attention (e.g. body, clothing, props, personality) and exaggerate them. In this book, we used a head-to-body ratio of 1:3 for stylized figures, drawing the head on the large side.

Stylized Version:

A. The eyebrows protrude outside the figure's silhouette.
B. Draw creases at the mouth's upper corners to create the illusion that the corners are turned up in a smile. The mouth appears to be grinning broadly. Draw the corners of the mouth turning up and add creases.
C. The folded arms project a sense of confidence. The arms' wide girth generates the impression of strength.
D. The tattered hem has been simplified.
E. The spread feet evoke the sense of a dynamic character.

Shounen Manga-Style Samurai

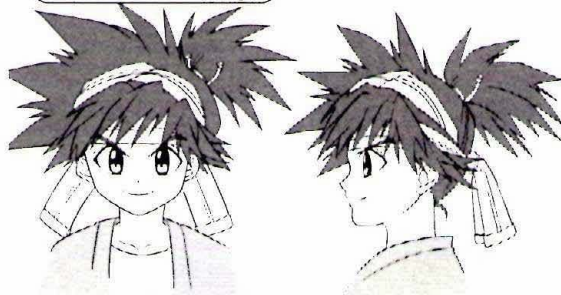
Here, we see a ubiquitous character: a young samurai indicative of the heroes found in *shounen manga.* Since this is a conventional character, let's focus on the costume design.

Key Points!

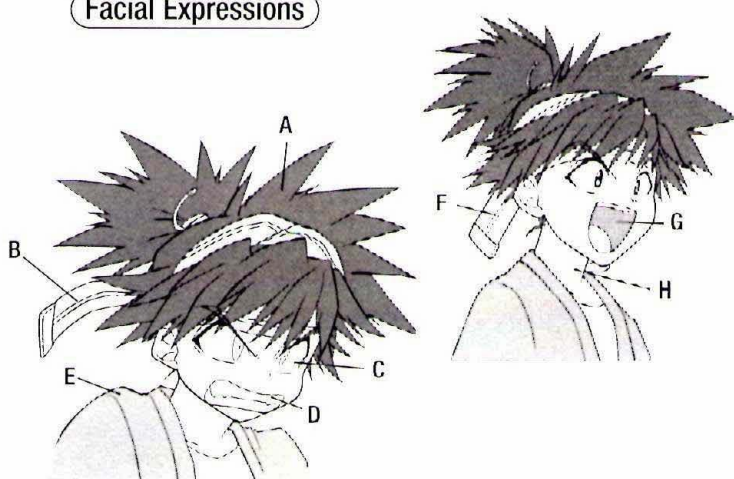
- A mischievous scamp who hates to lose, this character is perfecting his sword techniques.
- The inclusion of modern, fantasy elements makes the look even more interesting.

Rear View

If the character sports a long sword on his back, the hilt should extend from the shoulder opposite the hand favored by the character (e.g. if the character is right-handed, then the hilt should extend over the left shoulder).

Basic Face Design

Wholesome, Vivacious Young Samurai

- The *hachimaki* headband would normally obscure the eyebrows, but I made a point of drawing them above the *hachimaki* instead.
- The hair tufts of hair should not be haphazard, but rather have a defined flow. The bangs and the ponytail flow in opposing directions.

Facial Expressions

Giving a Dynamic Personality Dramatic Facial Expressions

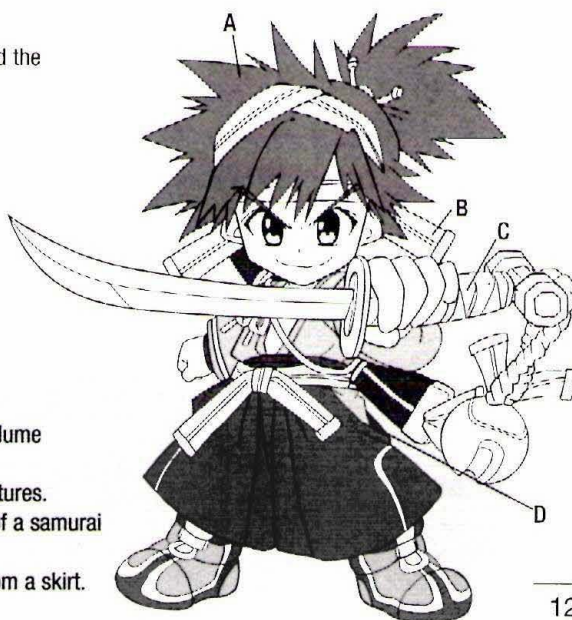
Left: An extremely angry expression: Raised line of vision with the face slightly turned down

A. The hair tufts are shown standing up even more when the character is angry than they would normally.
B. Accessories on the head also assist in portraying the character's mood: the *hachimaki* floats upward like the hair.
C. The pupils should be made small.
D. The mouth widens at the side, generating a threatening look. I included the canines to achieve an aggressive look.
E. The shoulders rise.

Upper Right: Samurai suddenly striking a look of joy

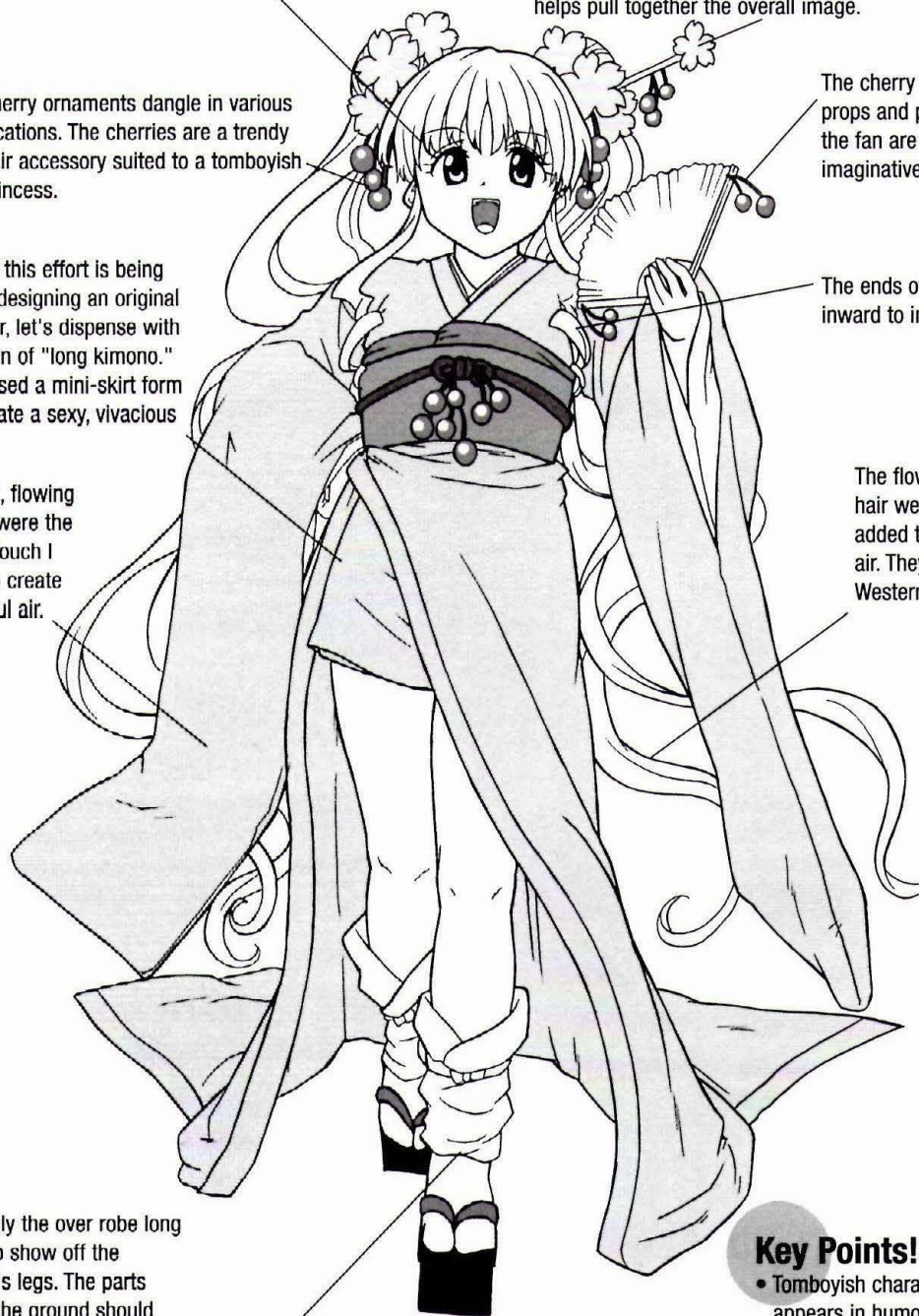
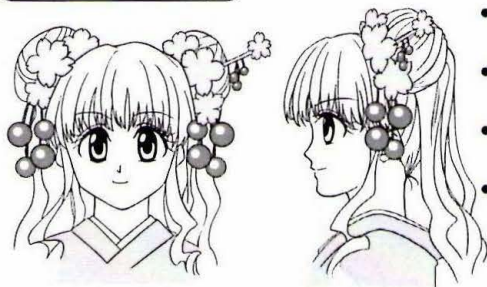
F. The *hachimaki* drops, and the head appears to rise suddenly.
G. The mouth opens wide in an animated fashion.
H. The neck appears elongated.

Stylized Version:

A. The lines composing the hair have been abbreviated, and the hair volume increased to accentuate the hairstyle.
B. Show the *hachimaki* ends sticking out: emphasize distinguishing features.
C. The sword is thrust closest to the picture plane, painting the image of a samurai confident in his swordsmanship.
D. Exaggerate the open sides at the *hakama*'s waist to distinguish it from a skirt.

Japanese Princess

Here, we present a princess character. When designing your own, use a little ingenuity to devise a unique character. The main theme for the princess shown here is cherry blossoms.

Key Points!

- Tomboyish character of the sort that appears in humorous *manga*.
- Cute, but willful and domineering
- Dispensing with the concept of black hair heightened the bright, cheerful image projected
- The cherry blossom motif enhances the character's image as a princess while adding a flowery touch.

Basic Face Design

- The face is pretty, yet willful in appearance.
- The eyes are bright and expressive.
- The eyebrows rise at a slight angle.
- The hair falls in pigtails from two buns at the side of the head.

F

Rear View

In this figure, the over robe has been removed to show her legs. The hair has also been made transparent to offer a view of her back.

Facial Expressions

Upper Fig.: Smugly snickering

G. The head tilts slightly.

Lower Fig.: Throwing a tantrum/hollering: The self-centered princess is so common, she is virtually ubiquitous.

A. The hair adornments float, giving the composition a sense of movement.
B. The bangs are messy, offering a view of the brow and suggesting that she is shaking her head.
C. Her cheeks flush charmingly as a result of her excited state.
D. The hair is disheveled.
E. The hands are bunched in fists and raised level with the chest.

Stylized Version:

I dressed the stylized version in a different over robe. The omission of the *obi* offers a sumptuous appearance, more indicative of a princess.

A. The eyes are large, and the eyelashes heighten their wide-open, bright appearance.
B. The waves in the hair have been simplified as well.
C. Note the differences in the waves of the side and rear locks.
D. The slender legs offer a sharp contrast to the billowing robes. Avoid drawing dumpy legs.

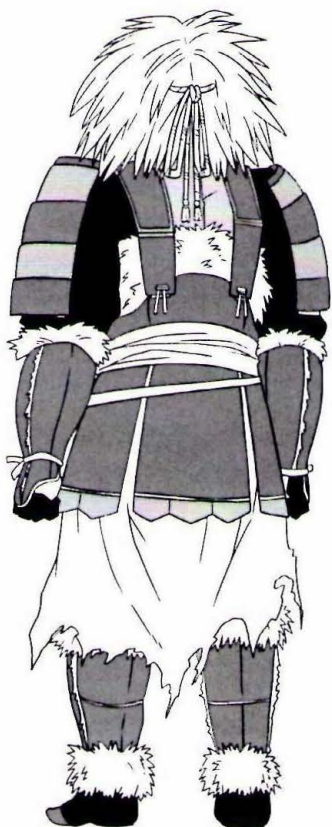
Military Chieftain in Skin and Fur Armor

Military chieftains also appear in various forms. The appearance of the armor affords an unlimited variety of character designs, achieved by dressing the character in armor suited particularly to him or modifying the shape of the helmet, etc. First, we will present a stately military chieftain.

Key Points!

- An older, cantankerous military chieftain
- The armor, which is made of fur and skin, should look imposing even on a slender character.
- The well-groomed beard suggests a proud spirit.

Rear View

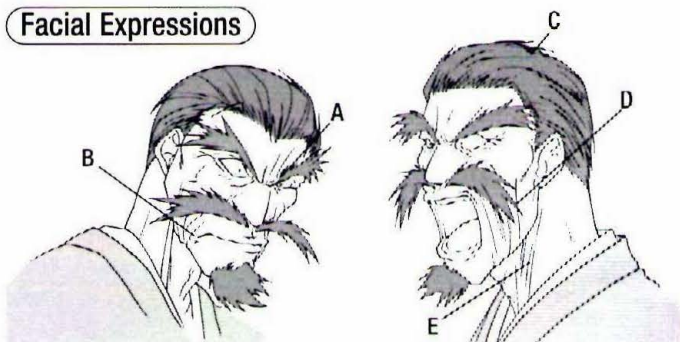
The nap of the helmet's fur is not haphazard. Rather, showing it parted in the middle with the fur brushed to each side offers a more natural look. The ends of the fur hang down. The armor where the figure's posterior lies underneath is slightly raised. The protrusion of the posterior is suggested by the inward curving creases in the fabric.

Prop: *Gunbai*

While at first glance, the *gunbai* seems like nothing more than a military fan, enlarging it gives it the appearance of a weapon. The fur tassel at the top solidifies the design with the chieftain's armor.

Basic Face Design

Character without Helmet

- The eyebrows, mustache, and goatee retain their shapes.
- The goatee juts forward, the corners of the mouth turn down, suggesting a stubborn father figure.

Facial Expressions

Left: Befuddled military chieftain

A. The brow between the eyebrows is deeply furrowed. One eye is half-closed, expressing surprise and confusion.

B. Wrinkles form at the corners of the tightly pursed mouth.

Right: Giving a commanding holler. The mouth is wide open vertically.

C. The hair is slightly tousled, appearing to stand on end.

D. Vertical wrinkles parallel to the mouth, showing that it is stretched in both an upward and downward direction.

E. Wrinkles appear in abundance at the neck.

Stylized Version:

The vertically slim body stands in sharp contrast to the large *gunbai* resting horizontally across his shoulders.

A. I increased the volume of the fur, omitted internal lines, using simplified, crisp and jagged forms.

B. I simplified the face, adding only a few wrinkles at the brow, the corners of the eyes, and the cheeks.

C. The mustache constitutes a major distinguishing feature, so I made it bigger.

D. I abstracted the knots.

E. I enlarge the *gunbai* and showed in resting across the shoulders.

F. Fur details are rendered simply using outlines.

Military Chieftain in Dragon Armor

This military chieftain was designed using a dragon as the overriding theme for his armor.

Key Points!

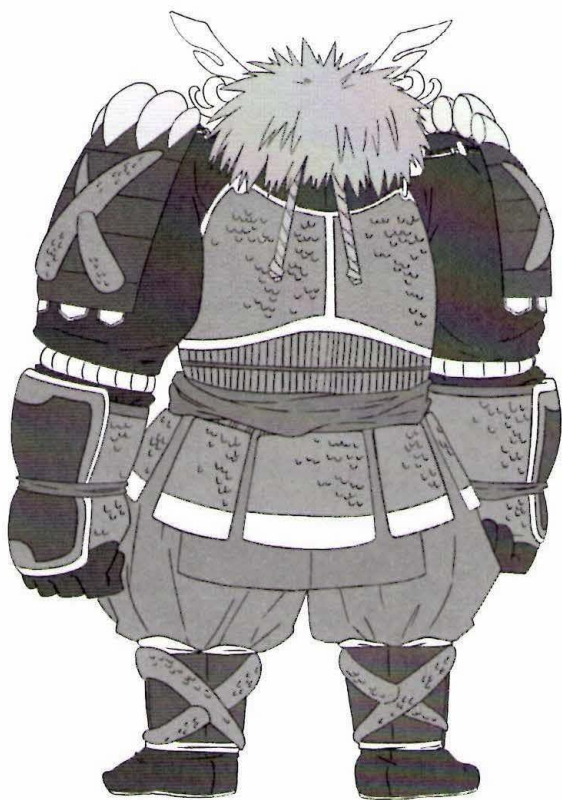
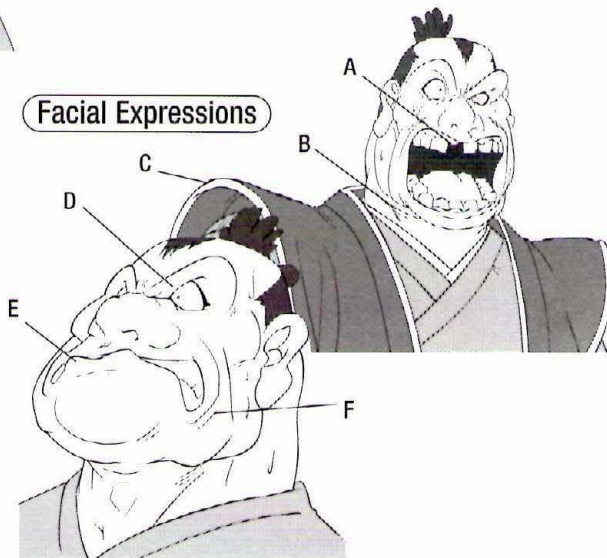
- Herculean strength
- Gargantuan build of inhuman size
- A character more inclined to force his opponent into submission physically than relying on military strategy
- This is an embittered character not playing with a full deck: a foe or adversarial role.

Basic Face Design

Removing the helmet reveals a small had and large face—a skeletal structure completely different from that of normal people.

- The muscles above the eyes look like eyebrows.
- The eyes' contours were rendered using heavier lines to make them appear to glare.
- The ends of the *mage* (top knot) are shown standing up, creating a visual accent. The *tsukishiro* (half-moon shaped hair on forehead) remains in the foreheads center.

Rear View

The shoulders are tense and held up. The head tilts forward. The head should appear low from the rear view.

Facial Expressions

Upper Fig.: Bellowing: Show the mouth wide open to create an image with impact.

A. The crooked teeth project an animalistic impression.

B. The wide-open mouth causes wrinkles to form at the neck underneath the chin.

C. Here, the character is shown wearing a stiff-shouldered *haori* vest to help retain the figure's broad-shouldered appearance even without the armor.

Lower Fig.: Chagrin in the defeat at an opponent's stratagem ("They got us good"): Commonly rendered as an upward tilted face

D. The eyes, with unnaturally small pupils, do not gaze upward, but rather forward.

E. The raised lower lip suggests vexation. Note the undulating contours of the lips.

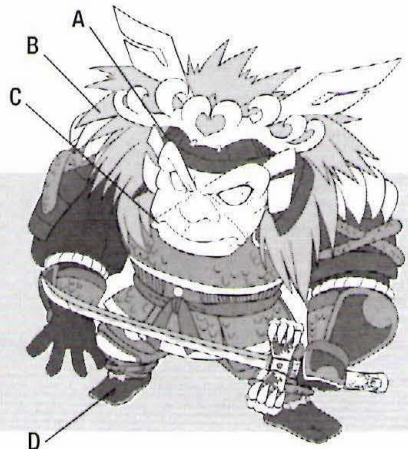
F. These creases result from the extended corners of the mouth.

Stylized Version:

A. The face's flesh extends outside of the helmet to an exaggerated degree.

B. The fur is drawn longer and draping over the shoulder to the figure's front.

C. The corners of the mouth are pursed to a straight line. Again, the tension in the mouth causes it to extend outside the face's outer contours.

D. The feet have been drawn smaller, since the image is composed from an overhead angle.

Ninja

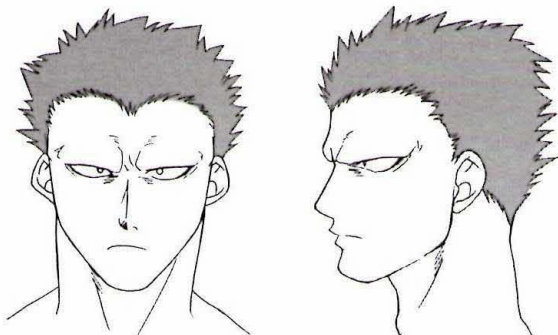
Ninja, whose main occupation is assassination and can be found skulking in the shadows, often play a villainous role. They are silent, lone wolves.

Key Points!

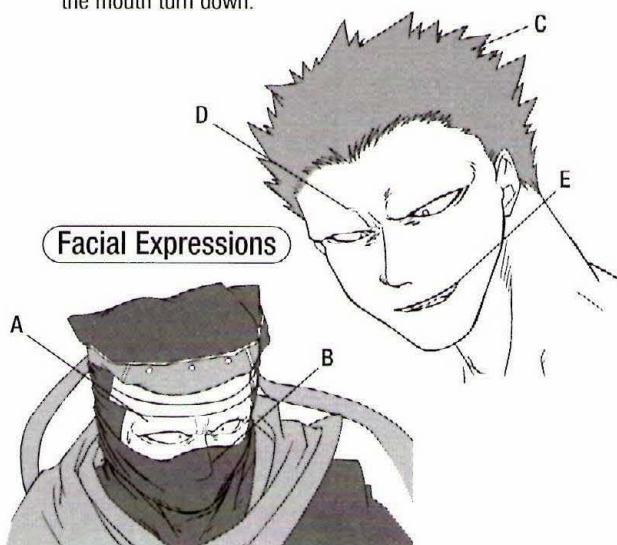
- Usually a villain with a taciturn, cold-hearted personality
- Slim build and dressed primarily in black
- The popular assassin pose is to show the figure bent at the waist with the hips held low and claws extended to use as a weapon.
- The clothing shown is close to the design of traditional ninja garb.

Basic Face Design

Fig. Showing Ninja without the Mask: Even without a mask or helmet, the ninja should still be a peculiar/individualistic character.

- Evil ninja are often shown with thin or entirely without eyebrows.
- The brow should be heavy. The ninja should not appear frail.
- Ninja are frequently shown with slight scowls. The corners of the mouth turn down.

Rear View

Draw the cape so that it is not covering the back. If the cape is shown fully covering the back, then the figure's details will be obscured.

Facial Expressions

Upper Fig.: The smile on this type of character is more of a sneer with the corners of the mouth curling up, giving the impression of hatching a dirty scheme.

C. The locks do not stand up indiscriminately, but rather have a defined flow to them. The area marked by C is the crown of the head, and virtually all of the surrounding hair flows in the same direction.

D. The gaze is cast downward as if looking down on someone.

E. One corner of the mouth spreads slightly in a sneer.

Lower Fig.: A formidable opponent has appeared and is giving the ninja a run for his money.

A. When wearing a mask that covers the face from chin to nose, the primary means for distinguishing changes in facial expressions are movement in the eyes and the placement of wrinkles in the face. The pupils appear in the center of the eyes and do not touch the eyelids either above or below. This generates the appearance of wide-open eyes and a desperate countenance.

B. Include the nose's contour line even when a mask covers the nose.

Stylized Version:

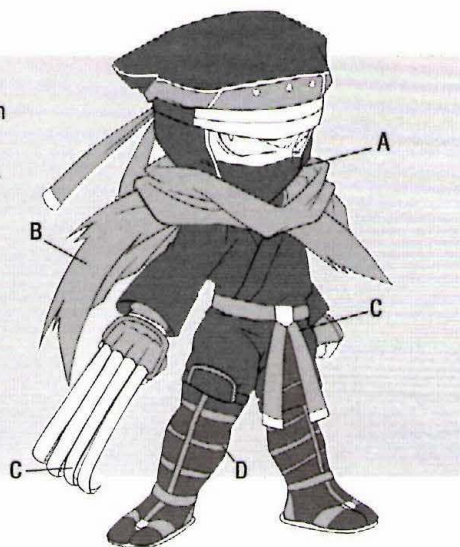
I exaggerated the size of the claws and achieved visual balance even though the figure is slim. The costume is extremely conventional, but the tattered cape, claws, and piercing glance help paint the picture of a shady character.

A. An undulating line was used for the mask's contours at the face with the nose jutting out.

B. The tatters rendered in straight lines have been simplified and made pointier.

C. The figure is slim.

D. The number of bands on the *tabi* has been reduced. Please note that the same number of bands appear on both the right and left.

E. The claws, which help identify the character, have been made larger.

Kunoichi (Female Ninja)

Kunoichi tend to be drawn in extremely short kimono with fishnet stockings and lots of exposed skin. Try to make a point of designing your *kunoichi* to be professional warriors with no touch of silly coquettishness.

Key Points!

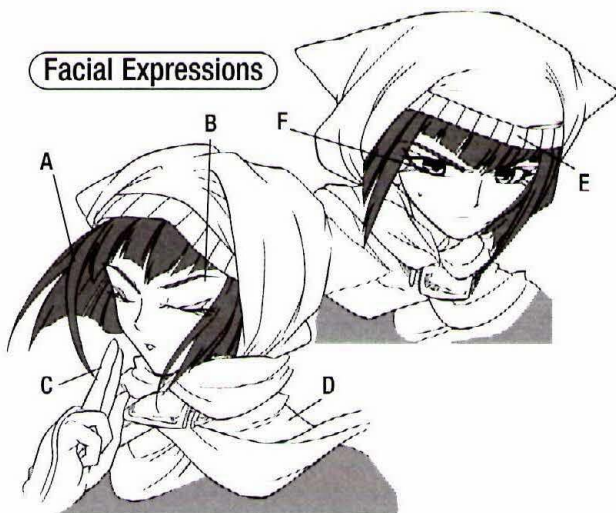
- Not much skin should be visible: the *kunoichi* is not a party girl.
- The costume design was based on the black garb of the ninja.
- The *kunoichi* is a professional assassin, concerned solely with successfully carrying out her mission.

Basic Face Design

- Do not be stingy in adding eyebrows to the *kunoichi*'s sharply defined eyes. Draw them as a solid unit extending to the corners of the eyes to set off the cosmetics.
- Neatly trimmed bobs and ponytails are both popular hairstyles for the *kunoichi*. Ponytails are normally associated with bubbly, alluring characters, but for the *kunoichi*, it is a frequently used hairstyle for aloof, sinister characters.
- For this character, I made a point of keeping the highlights in the eyes on the small side to give the eyes depth.

Rear View

From the back, the head appears slightly enlarged owing to the hood. The fishnet V-back, which matches the front, forms another accent. Draw the back open at a wider V than the front.

Facial Expressions

Upper Fig.: Annoyed at having a mission thwarted: She is not only feeling frustration but is also already planning her next move.

E. The head tilts slightly down, causing the lower contour of the hood to follow the curve of the head.

F. The hair forms a curtain around the head. The hair is straight.

Lower Fig.: Chanting a *ninpo* (*ninjutsu*) spell: A wind picks up around her.

A. The hair lifts upward in the swirling wind invoked by the *ninpo* spell the *kunoichi* cast.

B. The eyes are closed.

C. The hand gesture used to cast the spell is the same as that used by a ninja when making a pledge.

D. The cloth draped around the shoulders is shown fluttering in the wind as well.

Stylized Version:

For the stylized character, I accentuated the contrast in fit between the upper and lower half of the *kunoichi*'s costume. The cloth hanging from her shoulders is an excellent device for achieving visual balance in the overall figure.

A. The neatly trimmed hair may be defined using this single contour line, as seen in this figure.

B. The ends of the long, flowing cloth arc inward, containing the composition within a limited frame.

C. The fishnets stockings have been simplified and the legs made more slender.

D. The difference in size between the two feet has been exaggerated: the legs are spread, and showing one foot horizontal with respect to the picture plane creates a visually stable pose.

Character Comparison Chart

It is important to give the character a stature that matches his or her personality. When designing multiple characters, it is essential that you include characters with vastly different heights and builds. The protagonist is usually drawn at a stature the same as the line denoting the average height of all characters. Here, the characters as tall as the line denoting average height are the kabuki-style samurai for the male characters and the princess for the female characters.

Peculiar/Individualistic Characters

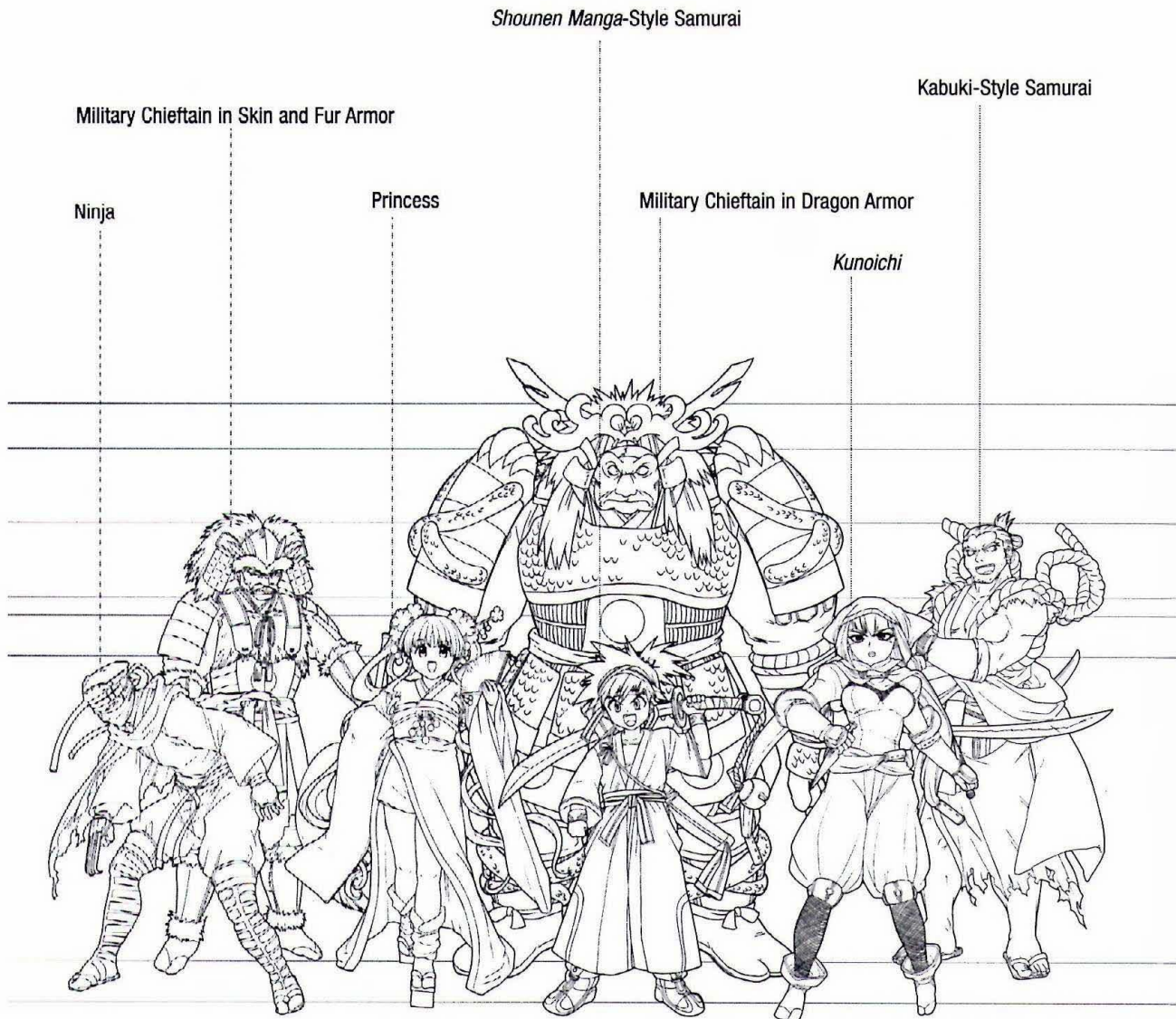
Ninja:

The ninja keeps his hips low and should be drawn with his head similarly low.

***Shounen Manga*-Style Samurai:**

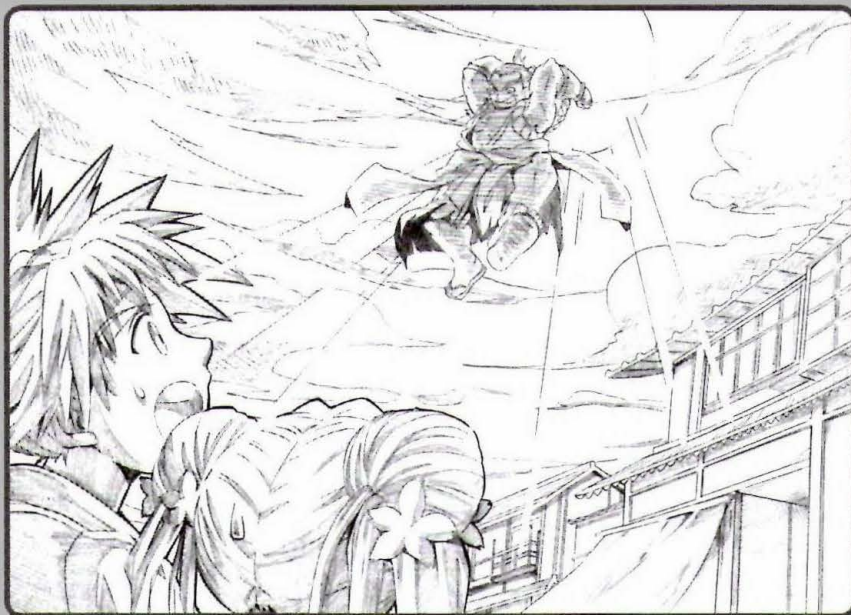
Given that this character is a boy, he should be given the shortest stature of all the male characters.

Military Chieftain in Dragon Armor:

This character is a giant: think "big."

Chapter 6 Assorted Scenes

Samurai

Description

In this scene, we see other characters' surprise to the actions of a kabuki-style samurai (hereafter "kabuki samurai"). The viewer's point of view matches that of the figures in the composition's lower corner, effectively imparting a sense of surprise at the samurai. He is actually jumping down from the roof, but I strove to make the viewer wonder, "Where did he come from?" by positioning him directly under the Sun. The lines depicting the Sun's rays also create the illusion of the sky appearing high overhead. The clouds form arcs concentrated underneath the Sun. Since this is supposed to be a humorous scene, I added a large sweat bead to the princess's head.

Setting

- This panel introduces the kabuki samurai.
- The samurai makes his entrance with an extravagant jump off the house's roof.
- The samurai's face is full of confidence without a shadow of fear.
- The scene carries a sense of surprise, where we see the princess and *shounen manga*-style samurai (hereafter "*shounen* samurai") look up at the kabuki samurai's shout, only to see him jump down before their very eyes.

Description

Here, removing the opponent from the composition and foreshortening the sword's blade so that the tip is close to the picture plane helps the sword pack a visceral punch for the viewer. The kabuki character's face displays an atypically serious expression as if to say, "When it's time to act, act!" The disparity between this character's normal state of being and his serious side is an aspect required of heroic characters.

Lines denoting the sword's sweep evoke a sense of speed.

Setting

- This is a dramatic fight scene.
- The panel shows the kabuki samurai swinging his sword forcefully.
- The samurai wears a heroic, solemn visage.

Description

To portray a sunny day, increase the area occupied by sky, creating a bright, expansive vista. Visually connect the portion of the path close to the picture plane to that in the background to induce the reader to imagine the *shounen* samurai has walked far. Another subtle technique is to use a nonstandard shape for the rice ball. The addition of the sweat beads on the Jizo (patron saint of children and travelers) statue is an understated touch that portrays a look of disgust as well as brings the stature to life and imbues it with a sense of humor.

Setting

- Here we see a *shounen* samurai seated next to a roadside Jizo statue, taking a break from his journey on a pleasant, sunny day.
- The samurai is attempting to eat a large onigiri rice ball.
- This is a tender, congenial scene, where the samurai even offers to share the onigiri with the Jizo sculpture.

Description

The hero delivers a crushing, just blow to a minor villain.

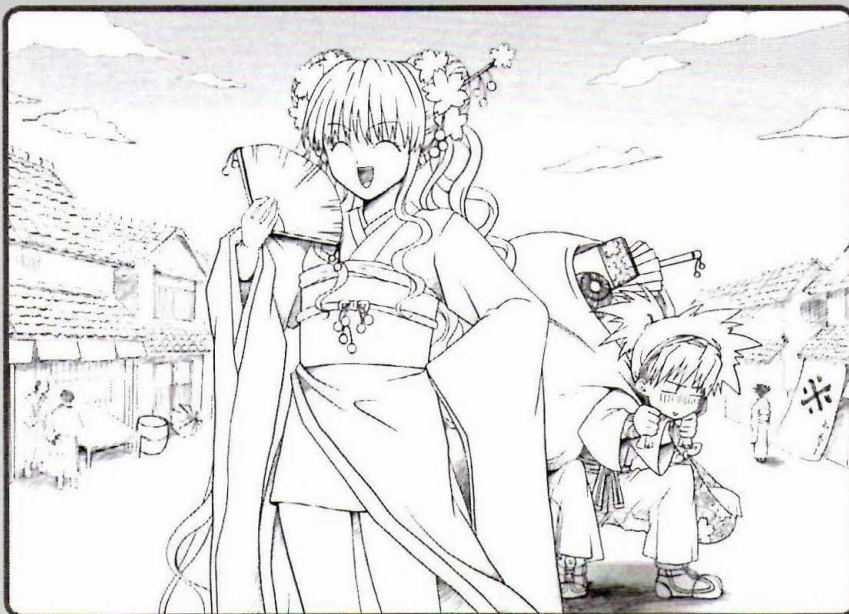
As this character has the sensibility of a *shounen manga*-style protagonist, take care to avoid showing him graphically slashing the opponent. Add diagonal lines to his feet to suggest speed. We glean from the background trees that the sneak had stolen into the forest, only to be chased by our hero. The background was drawn as if the trees covered the scene from overhead, while the vanishing point was positioned in the sky above (or rather, behind) the samurai.

Setting

- The thief had stolen the *shounen* samurai's purse, only to have the samurai chase after him to retrieve it.
- The samurai descends toward the thief, whilst shouting "stop!"
- The samurai is wielding his sword, but there is no sense that he intends to kill the thief.

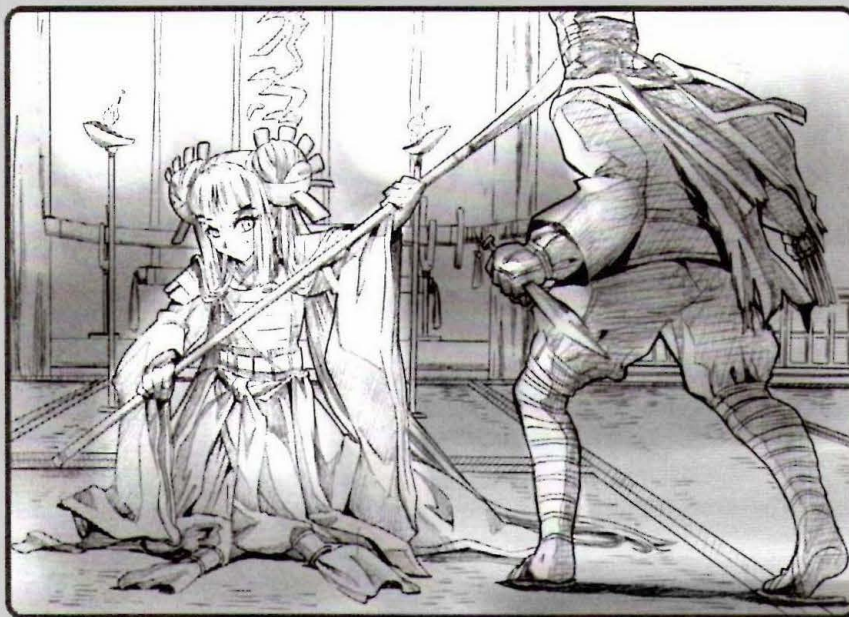
Princesses

Description

This type of scene seems indicative of a self-centered character, and almost ubiquitously comical. Showing the character having gone shopping and purchased an extensive array of items weaves a modern-day sensibility into the scene, while wrapping her items in a furoshiki (traditional cloth for bundling parcels) places the scene within its historical context. The shonen samurai, who finds himself as her companion, is drawn comically trudging along, carrying the heavy load, and wearing a haggard expression on his face. The princess spreads her fan and assumes a satisfied pose.

Setting

- A princess incognito shops in the town at the foot of her castle.
- The princess comes across the shonen samurai and wheedles him into carrying her purchases.
- Behind the smug, loudly laughing princess, we see the dejected shonen samurai, laden with his heavy burden.

Description

Here we see a Warring States Period princess, wearing a dangerous expression on her face after having been taken unawares by a ninja, causing her to immediately assume a defensive stance. This is a tension-charged scene, where the princess, still kneeling, is attempting to stand somehow. The ninja, faced with the naginata (the princess's halberd-like weapon), carefully watches the princess, waiting for his chance to strike. Both figures, positioned in the center of the room, assume a battle-ready pose.

Setting

- A princess sits at night lost in thought in the center of a dimly lit room.
- She is attacked by an enemy ninja, and quickly grabs the naginata to defend herself.

Military Chieftains

Description

Here, the military chieftain is shown wearing an expression of disgust at the cowardly methods of his enemy. In the background are the woman and child he has just saved, while the chieftain blocking the assault of his enemy's sword occupies the foreground.
The composition's angle allows for the portrayal of action together with the state of the psyche. Using more extensive shading on the military chieftain in the foreground generates a sense of depth and distance from the characters in the background.

Setting

- Here we see the military chieftain in skin and fur armor (hereafter "fur armor samurai") shielding the woman and her child from the enemy's blow.
- The fur armor samurai fends off the enemy's sword with his own.
- The woman holding her child behind the fur armor samurai sinks to the ground, immobilized by fear.

Description

Positioning the fleeing enemy foot soldiers near the picture plane and drawing the military chieftain in dragon armor (hereafter "dragon samurai") from a low angle illustrates the difference in body size between the dragon samurai and the foot soldiers, emphasizing the might of the dragon samurai's arms.

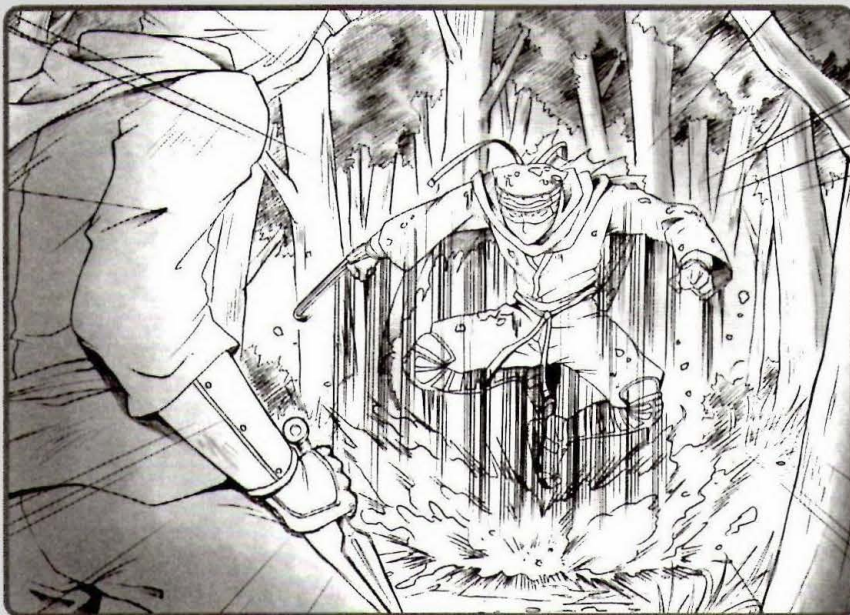
The dragon samurai makes a wide sweep with his arm as if sending the foot soldiers flying with a first and then a second swing of this arm. Drawing him wielding a tree trunk in his other hand illustrates his Herculean strength, setting him apart from normal men. The dragon samurai's gaze should be directed downward.

Setting

- This is a battle scene.
- The dragon samurai's soldiers have been utterly annihilated, and enemy foot soldiers surround the dragon samurai.
- The dragon samurai shows no sign of flinching. Instead, the gigantic samurai mows down the enemy soldiers.
- The enemy foot soldiers flee.

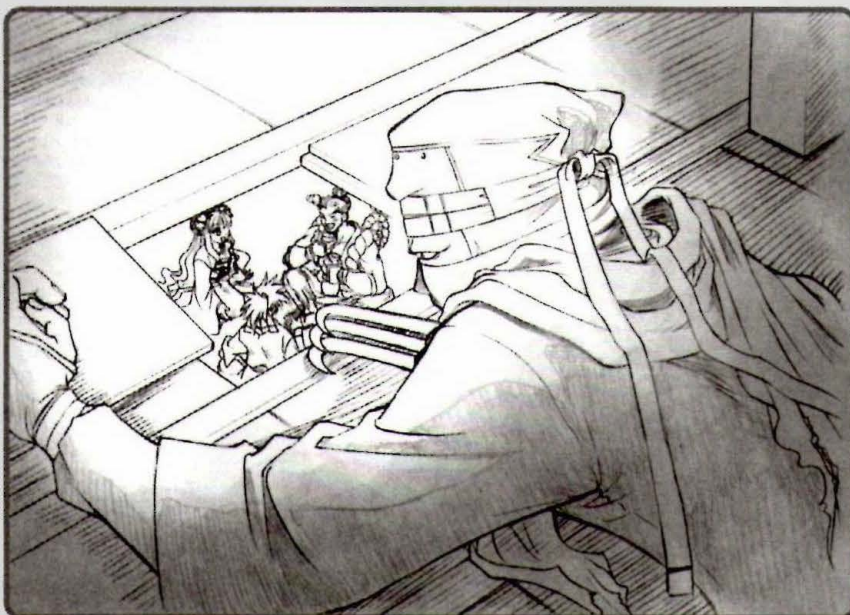
Ninja

(Description)

The panel could be drawn to show the ninja to have simply dug his way out of the ground, but suggesting that the ninja used *ninjutsu* (the art of stealth, espionage, and assassination) to create the illusion of having sprung from the ground. Use sharp angles for the ground to illustrate that the ninja burst from the ground. Drawing speed lines from the body's under regions creates the illusion of swiftness. Lighten and/or erase the backdrop behind the ninja to give emphasis to the speed lines.

Setting

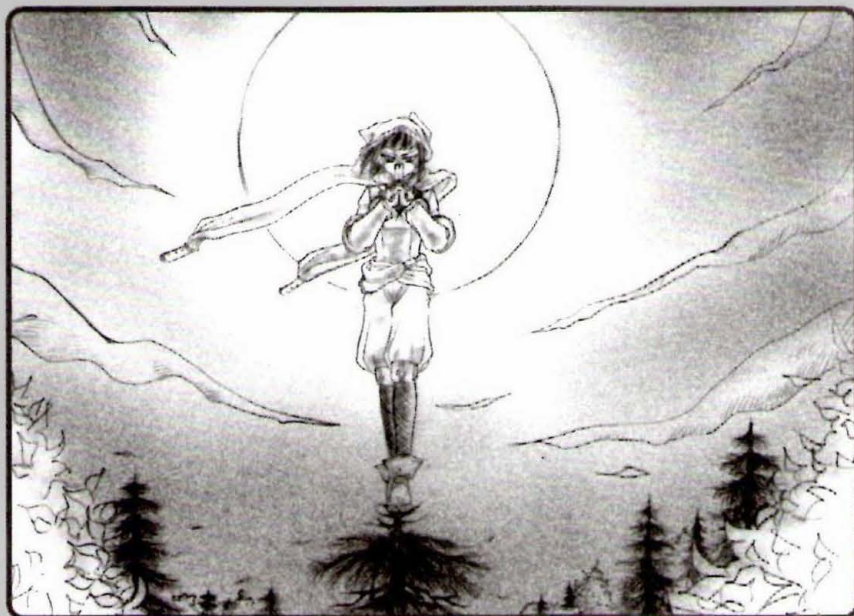
- This is a fight scene.
- The ninja, who has been hiding underneath the ground, suddenly springs up in front of the *kunoichi* and confronts her.
- The ninja assumes a hunched pose and holds his arms out to the side, ready to strike.

(Description)

This composition centers on the ninja, and our point of view is from inside the ceiling. The princess and her companions, like the ninja, appear to be concealing themselves in a confined space. Realistically, given the size of the ceiling panel and its location, the ninja would likely be discovered in an instant. However, here it is merely a device for fitting the characters being observed within the composition.

Setting

- The ninja inside the ceiling spies on the kabuki samurai, the shonen samurai, and the princess enjoying themselves at the inn.
- The ninja lies prostrate against the ceiling.

Description

Here we see a familiar scene for a *kunoichi* making her entrance. Center the figure against the moon, so that the *kunoichi* appears to be floating, silhouetted against the full moon. Show her clothing being lifted back briskly by the wind, and the tree leaves fluttering about in an ethereal manner. The tree on which the *kunoichi* stands is a conifer, so it should have a long, tall silhouette. The *kunoichi* is bathed in bright moonlight, causing dark shadows to form on her front.

Setting

- Here we see a stock *kunoichi* pose.
- The *kunoichi* stands at the very tip of the tree, intoning a *ninjutsu* spell.
- The *kunoichi* looks fiercely forward with a piercing gaze.

Description

It is difficult to maintain a dynamic composition in scenes showing multiple figures attacking. Here, the *kunai* knives thrown by the *kunoichi* are positioned near the picture plane to give the composition impact. The faces of the surrounding ninja are enshrouded in shadow to make the *kunoichi* stand out. Radiating lines branch out from the *kunoichi*. The *kunoichi* and ninja do not run along the ground, but rather true to the *ninjutsu*, move stealthily along tree branches.

Setting

- This is a group battle scene where a lone *kunoichi* fights an assemblage of ninja in an uneven match.
- She weaves between the trees whilst surrounded by enemy ninja.
- She throws her *kunai* knives at a single opponent, wearing an expression of determined defiance on her face.

Author Profile

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Originally from Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. Fukagai joined Team Esaka in 2001 after graduating from a design institute. At Team Esaka, Fukagai is responsible for artwork production and design.

Professional Background

Graphic-sha Publishing: *Jidaigeki kyara no kakikata* ("Drawing Historical Characters") (Artwork)
Ozora Publishing: /Connect, Inagural Issue (Cover Artwork)
Osaka Shoseki: *Seikatsu Kyokasho* ("Lifestyle Textbook"), vol. 1 and 2 (Character Illustrations)
Masami Esaka *Art Works* (Layout Design, etc.)
Sansei R&D: *CR Oh! Samurai* (Character Design)
J-Factory: *Fran-Fran and Yumeori Kozo* (Coloring and Character-related Product Design)
Lotte: *Bikkuriman 2000* (Character Design and Coloring)

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Team Esaka

Illustrator Masami Ekasa founded the artist studio Team Esaka Co., Ltd in 1999. Team Esaka is a creative group, producing a continuous and bountiful variety of illustrations and character designs.

URL http://www.esaka-net.com/en/black/e_index.html

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